

new masses

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MAXIM GORKY: An Unpublished Letter to Stanislavsky

TIDAL WAVE ON THE WATERFRONT by Richard O. Boyer

DRAVA BRIDGE: a story by Palmer Thompson

just a minute



WE HAD a letter the other day that we think many young writers in New York will be interested in. Here it is:

"Dear NEW MASSES: For some months now you have been following the growth of the new organization, Contemporary Writers. Your editors have to a good extent helped in its growth by recommending young authors to us. I feel, because of this, that you and your readers will be glad to know that this anti-fascist group of writers is functioning full force and growing steadily.

"The workshops, which form the basic organization for literary production, meet regularly each week. Short stories, poems and novels are being produced by our members. Several of our short story people through the aid of CW's workshops have finished stories of good quality which are now on their way toward sale and publication. Two of our novelists have books on the presses for release in the near future. Our poets are in the process of arranging a collective volume of poetry. Naturally, we are proud of these accomplishments. And this represents only a partial score of three months' work!

"At present we are using the summer to plan for the fall, at which time we will blast out in full activity. We are looking for more authors to join us—published and unpublished authors, young writers and old,

all Marxist and anti-fascist writers. Our need for people is twofold: first, we need forces to help in the business of sharpening the anti-fascist literary weapon; second, we need people to build Contemporary Writers so that it may become the largest group of anti-fascist literary workers in the US.

"Until we permanently install ourselves in a headquarters of our own our address will be 146 W. 11 Street, New York (the home of Earl Coleman), GR 7-5121. Interested authors can write or call us there. We would be happy to receive writers at that address on Saturday afternoons, 3 to 5 P.M.

"MILTON BLAU,
"Membership Director."

WHILE the historic CIO drive to organize the South gets under way, it seems that our own Operation Dixie comes in for some criticism. Mrs. Paul Guyton of Stoneboro, Pa., writes us:

"The other day I received a copy of NM, and in it is a cartoon called 'Southern Quilting Bee.' This is a timely cartoon, but it should have a title of 'KKK Quilting Bee' or something more specific.

"Once before I wrote you that your paper was, to me, a sectional magazine. You answered that it was not, or to that effect. At that time I was thinking of a poem which referred to 'the dead South and the live North.'

"If I were not so interested in seeing this country be a real democracy I would not write this. But NM cannot lead the whole country if it contains unpleasant references to a whole section of the US and does not use the same unpleasant references to other sections. I mean that I have never seen any unpleasant reference to the 'North.'

"I am much more critical of my native South than any native Pennsylvanian could be, because I know about all the dreadful aspects of Southern life. But there are a lot of us who love the South just the same way that Sinclair Lewis loves his section of the country. Either you or someone else is all off the beam in your interpretation of Marxist teaching."

We accept the criticism. But that we aren't really "off the beam" in our policy toward the South was exemplified by our publication (NM, May 28) of the article "I Love the South," by Don West, which showed that the KKK, Rankin and Bilbo were not truly representative of the people of that region.

IT IS with deep regret that we learned of the death of Pauline Gitnick, for many years an active friend of NM. Exiled to Siberia for her part in the 1905 revolution, she came to this country thirty-five years ago and became a social worker. Although she had long been quietly helping to supply NM with its life-blood—subscriptions—it was only last year, when she won our sub contest, that we on the staff came to know her. One of her last thoughts must have been for our magazine, for not long before she died, at the age of seventy, we got the last of the many subs she had gathered—from fellow patients—as she lay in the hospital.

B. M.

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TIDAL WAVE ON THE WATERFRONT

After years of anti-fascist struggle, the maritime workers fight now for basic American liberties. The kind of men who built the NMU.

By RICHARD O. BOYER

THE approaching maritime strike, if it occurs, will be a struggle marked with significance for the United States and the world. It will be a strike for the American right to strike. It will be a struggle for fundamental American liberties deemed by many beyond threat until recent days of the Truman administration. It will be a strike to maintain the Bill of Rights, denied to strikers faced with the armed intervention of the American Navy and Coast Guard. For the first time in history striking American trade unions will be backed by the organized labor movement of the world. For the first time in history the newly formed World Federation of Trade Unions, with headquarters in Paris and sixty million members reaching from Asia and Africa to Europe, Latin America, Great Britain, Canada, Australia and the United States will throw its earth-encircling weight behind an American strike. For the first time in history a domestic strike will have profound repercussions on American foreign policy. Everywhere, the world over, men will talk of the retreat of American democracy, wonder if a government that uses its armed forces against its own people at home can be trusted abroad, ask if the Four Freedoms do not apply to Americans, wonder if the benevolence that proposes bayonets against its own workers can be trusted with the atom bomb.

If America's 200,000 maritime workers are forced to the picket line they will fight as American workers never fought before. The newspapers may regard them as incendiaries but they will regard themselves as battlers against the first legalized American manifestations of fascism. It was not their wish that their demand for a living wage be elevated to a political *cause celebre*. That was President Truman's doing who said he would use American armed forces against Americans asking for an additional twenty-two cents an hour and a forty-four hour week. Maritime workers feel that the President's declaration was but one more step in the administration's drive

to break the labor movement as a necessary preliminary to war with Russia.

If the country must be faced with an embryo fascism, or what may develop into such unless it is checked, it is fortunate, in a sense, that the maritime workers are its first target. For they are professional fighters of fascism. They fought it before the war, they fought it throughout the war, and they are fighting it now. They have fought it abroad and they have fought its American manifestations at home. Hundreds of American sailors have risked their lives in skillful work with the Underground in Hitler's Germany, in Mussolini's Italy, in Franco's Spain. They are the one group of Americans who, before Dec. 7, 1941, day after day and in port after port faced and fought the naked force of fascism.

Eight hundred members of the National Maritime Union left the picket-line in the 1936-37 strike that founded the union and made their way to Spain, where some 200 gave their lives in this first fight against fascism. Those fighting in Spain felt that their comrades working to build the union at home, battling against spies and gangsters hired by the shipowners, were as much in the struggle against fascism as those who fell before Madrid. The 200 members of the NMU who died at Spain's Ebro and Teruel are honored in the same phrases used to describe the sacrifice of the twenty-seven killed and eight who starved in the fight to build the union at home. Both those killed in the three bloody strikes that built and maintained the NMU and the 5,000 members killed by enemy action in the late war are hailed in a pledge taken by NMU members which states they will continue to fight in the spirit "of our hallowed dead, the spirit of free men who never have and never will bend the knee to fascist slavery."

PERHAPS it is fitting that the men who were the first to fight fascism aboard be the first to fight it here. As I write I think of J. Gordon Rosen, who has seen fascism or its like in all parts of the world and who told me

he had never seen its face so clearly as he had in Port Arthur, Texas, where in 1939 he was kidnapped and tortured by Port Arthur police during a tanker strike. I think of Joe Curran, NMU president, who during the last decade has faced every form of organized pressure that a hostile world could muster against him. I think of Blackie Myers, who has been whipped, stabbed, beaten and jailed in his ten-year fight for the NMU, for the right to organize, for the right of free speech and against what he thought were American manifestations of fascism.

I think of Joe Stack, who in 1935 made a speech against the Nazis on a Hamburg street-corner and spent six months in the hospital as a result. I recall how Bill McCarthy, after fighting in Spain with the Abraham Lincoln Brigade, was imprisoned in fascist Italy where he continued his fight against fascism with the Italian Underground. I think of Josh Lawrence, one of the Negro leaders of the NMU, who is a member of the National Board of the Communist Party, fighting for racial equality while under the threat of the Ku Klux Klan in Alabama and Mississippi. I remember how Francis Xavier O'Hallahan was jailed by the Japanese in Shanghai in 1938 as a result of his activity there with the Chinese people. I think of the NMU sailors who have been jailed in India for their fight for freedom there, of others who were jailed under the Vargas regime in Brazil, of those who demonstrated in South Africa against the discrimination directed against the Negro people.

Sometimes they seem to me a new kind of American. They know that the world whose seas they sail is one world. They know that what happens in Indonesia or Africa is as important as what happens in Brooklyn or Chicago. They have little division between thought and action, know that politics must be a daily activity if elections every four years are to have meaning. They can never be finally beaten. Their union cannot be broken. It was built from the life and sinew of Joe Curran's six feet three inches of height and 224



"Waterfront Committee Meeting," by Forrest Wilson.

hard pounds. It was built from the sweat and often the blood of Howard McKenzie, Ferdinand Smith, Jack Lawrenson, John Leary, M. Hedley Stone, Jim Cunningham, Jake Faber, Tommy Christensen and Johnny Rogan. It was built from the hard, dangerous lives of Charlie Harmon, Harry Rubin, Jim Drury, Al Lannon, John McIntosh, Paul Pulazzi, Oliver Boutte, Lowell Chamberlain, Robert Mills, E. E. Williams, Roy Hudson, Dan Boano, Harry Connery, A. E. Phillips, Jim Longhi, Pete Smith and many others.

The men of the NMU will never return to the days prior to 1937 when pay, if you got it, was twenty-five dollars a month, when between twelve and twenty men slept in one small, cramped, fetid fo'c'sle, when twelve hours a day was a short day, and when the food was so bad that a smart sailor, if his finances permitted, always brought canned food with him on every voyage, feeding himself at his own expense.

AS I TALKED to these men and others a few days ago it seemed to me I was hearing a recent history of our country, the story of a time, related not in the smooth periods of the historian or student, nor in the unctuous paragraphs of newspaper editorials but in the hot, sweaty, bloody reality of anonymous human beings whose day-to-day struggles are the authentic stuff of history. I talked to scores of old-timers who, when they could not get jobs at sea, often beat their way as migratory workers from one end of the country to the other, being arrested in

one place, participating in a strike in another, riding blind baggage in zero weather, clinging to the rails beneath freights climbing the Rockies, being thrown from moving trains by railroad bulls, being held as vagrants in dozens of the nation's jails, and always, always moving on as they searched for work.

A few remembered how the Pullman strike in 1893 was lost, how the Homestead Steel Strike was smashed with a massacre in 1892, how the Great Steel Strike of 1919 was broken. Others remembered the textile strikes at Lawrence and Paterson in 1913, the Ludlow Massacre in Colorado in 1913, the seamen's strike in 1921 and that whatever the strike and wherever the place they usually had, in those days, the common denominator of having been lost.

Still others recalled jails under Coolidge, breadlines under Hoover, demonstrations asking for relief and unemployment insurance, and the building of unemployed councils all over the country in 1930 which were the first to bring the plight of the 17,000,000 jobless to the attention of the nation. I talked to seamen who had shocked wheat in North Dakota, picked beets in Colorado, harvested lettuce, prunes, oranges in California, lumber-jacked in Washington, and shipped whenever and wherever they could in a merchant marine that between two world wars employed less than half of the nation's seamen. In their combined experience was the modern history of American labor. In their collective lives was the rise of the New Deal and the CIO. They were short and tall, young and old, white, black

and yellow, Jewish, Irish, Serbian, Puerto Rican, Scotch, French and German, but they were all Americans either by birth or naturalization. There are those, I know, who eye such as these with misgivings. But to the respectable the tattered soldiers of the American Revolution were a rabble in arms. To the well-bred the American abolitionists were wild-eyed incendiaries. But Whitman liked these people. He was referring to them when he wrote "... the genius of the United States is ... in the common people ... through all its mighty amplitude ... they never give up believing and expecting. ..."

THE day after Pearl Harbor members of the NMU voted to voluntarily rescind the strike weapon for the duration of the war. So did the International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union, of which Harry Bridges is the head. So did the National Union of Marine Cooks and Stewards as well as the Marine Firemen, Oilers, Watertenders and Wipers and the American Communications Association. These unions are in this fight with the NMU. I have concentrated on the latter union in this piece simply because I know about it and do not happen to be informed in any detail on the others. But their stories are similar to that of the NMU and match it in bravery displayed. In addition two other CIO maritime unions, not yet in negotiations with the ship operators, are supporting the strike call and have pledged respect for picketlines.

The public should now recall that not a day or hour was lost in the ship-

ping industry as a result of wartime industrial dispute, not a single ship was delayed through almost four years of war. Senators, admirals, generals, preachers and editors, in addition to the late President Roosevelt, then joined in praising the maritime unions. Whole convoys, manned by union sailors, were destroyed by bombers and submarines in the icy waters of the Arctic. NMU members died off Casablanca and Oran in Africa, off Palermo and Gela in Sicily, in the harbors at Sorrento and Naples, on the run to Malta, near the beach of Anzio, in the British Channel off the Normandy beaches, in India's Bay of Bengal, at Guadalcanal and Kwajalein and Eniwetok, at Guam and Saipan and Iwo Jima and at Leyte and Luzon and Okinawa. "They brought us our life blood and paid for it with their own," said General Douglas MacArthur. "Wherever the Marines went, the merchant marine also went," said General A. A. Vandegrift, commandant of the Marine Corps.

Perhaps because they wore no uniforms and did not have the nice precision of a military organization, the public has been slow to admit and quick to forget the contribution to victory of these trade unionists. To the conventional eye they were unimpressive. Many were runty, pasty-faced little men, adenoidal and open-mouthed; others were huge, mishapen, hairy and to the respectable viewpoint too loud, too truculent, too given to argument and drink—and perhaps half of them spoke with a foreign accent. But if you knew them you knew they were the salt of the earth. They were civilians who went to war, civilian employees of private companies—for so our merchant marine is constructed—and there was surely no queerer way of going to war than this. A man might be sleeping in a flop-house one day and participating in bloody battle the next. A boy might be on a farm one week and on a raft the following. Despite the training programs of the United States Merchant Marine, the need for men was so great that almost anyone willing might find himself at sea.

And it was the NMU that gave them a program, that trained them, pulled them together, and gave them morale and self-respect. They often wore disparate parts of cheap, cast-off naval uniforms, sweatshirts and dungarees and assorted caps and hats—and occasionally cowboys went to sea still wearing their small-heeled embroidered riding boots and Stetson hats. Their

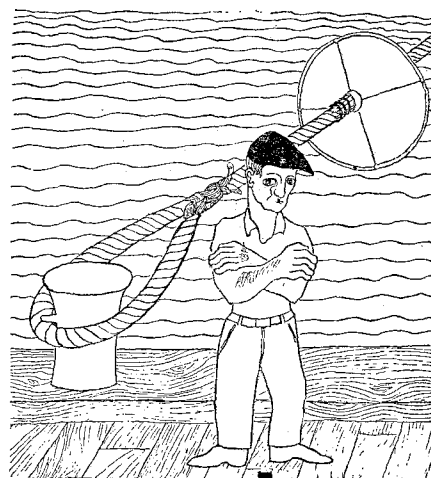
appearance, especially their clashing incongruity, was the despair of officers who longed for trimness and regularity and instead got boys as young as sixteen and men as old as sixty, as well as a collection of dental plates and trusses and even a few glass eyes. They were, in fact, the people and the people are hard to romanticize.

It was difficult, for example, to see anything heroic in George Kenneth Randolph, a Negro whose black pull-over sweater exposed his midriff by never quite meeting his trousers and who usually held his speech to "yes" and "no" while his features remained as immobile as a wall. Yet on the morning of May 10, 1943 he leaped into a shark-infested sea, after having been wounded in a bombing that sank his ship in the South Pacific, and pulled ten of his mates to the safety of a raft. He will be on the picketline.

Nor was there anything impressive about Cesar Contrera, little New York Italian who always wore a baseball cap, a sweatshirt and a scapular above his baggy khaki trousers and who was six months recovering from burns received when he crawled through a wall of flame to drag the captain of a torpedoed tanker to safety. Contrera will be on the picketline.

To the naked eye there was little notable in the appearance of Nick Hoogendam, who spent eighty-three days on an open raft after being torpedoed, nor was there anything remarkable in the appearance of portly John Stanizewski, a fifty-year-old Pole who was torpedoed nine times. Poon Lim, a Chinese member of the union, survived 133 days on a raft and after three months in a hospital went back to sea and was again torpedoed.

Union Brother Elliott Gurnee spent twenty-four days on a raft on which



Forrest Wilson.

two of his shipmates died. He expressed the spirit of the union as well as anyone when he afterward said in describing his experience: "Even when Alsbrook died, I kept one thing straight in my mind. I was going to come through. I went through the '36 and '37 strikes. I helped build the union. I said to myself, 'I'll be god-damned if I'll let a few Nazi bastards kill me!' Even when I was watching the sharks gobble up Shaw when he fell off the raft, even then I swore I wouldn't die. I carved 'NMU' on that raft and I said, 'If those Nazi sons-of-bitches find this raft I'll still be on it alive and it'll have my trade mark on it.'"

THESE are the men who were heroes in war and who some would have as villains in peace. They and thousands of other of the torpedoed and bombed will be on the picketlines, if there is a strike, and they ask your support. They ask you to remember the almost unbelievable profits of the shipping companies. They ask you to remember that the average wartime profits of the shipping industry were 200 percent greater than in peacetime and that the profits of some companies were astronomical. They ask you to recall that Senator Hugo Black, now a member of the United States Supreme Court, found in 1935 that the shipowners had raided the public treasury to the tune of millions. They ask you to remember the recent declaration of Senator Aiken when he was discussing the \$21,000,000,000 of the taxpayers' money which somehow during the war found its way into the private coffers of the shipping companies.

Senator Aiken said, "When an examination of Maritime Commission affairs has been brought up to date, it will be the most shocking story of collusion, corruption and disregard of public interest ever presented against an agency of the United States government." The shipowners control the Maritime Commission.

But above all the seamen ask you to remember they are only asking decent wages and reasonable hours. They want no political strike. They only ask for a reduction in their present fifty-six hour work week and an increase in pay that will bring their earnings to a point equal to that they received during the war. After all, prices have risen thirty-six percent, according to the lowest government figures, while seamen are receiving an average of fifty dollars a month less than during the war.

A LETTER TO STANISLAVSKY

A play takes shape before your eyes. The writer taps the "untouched strata of personal impressions which lie in the soul of every man."

By MAXIM GORKY

This hitherto unpublished letter from Gorky to the director of the Moscow Art Theater is from MAXIM GORKY: Reminiscences, a Pursuit Press book which is being published on June 18, the tenth anniversary of Gorky's death.

October 12, 1912

DEAR KONSTANTIN SERGEIEVICH: An artist is one who is able to exploit his personal, subjective impressions, to find in them that which is significant and objective, and to present them in original form.

Most people do not exploit their sub-

jective ideas. When a person wants to mold his life experiences into clear and accurate forms, he employs ready-made forms. He uses words, images, pictures that are not his own. He subordinates himself to the prevailing accepted views as to what they should be.

I am quite convinced that every person has the potentialities of an artist, and that under conditions more receptive to his thoughts, abilities and sensitivities, these potentialities could be greatly developed.

Every person is thus presented with the problem of finding himself, of realizing his subjective attitude toward life, toward people, and toward a given fact, and to embody these attitudes into words and forms that are his own.

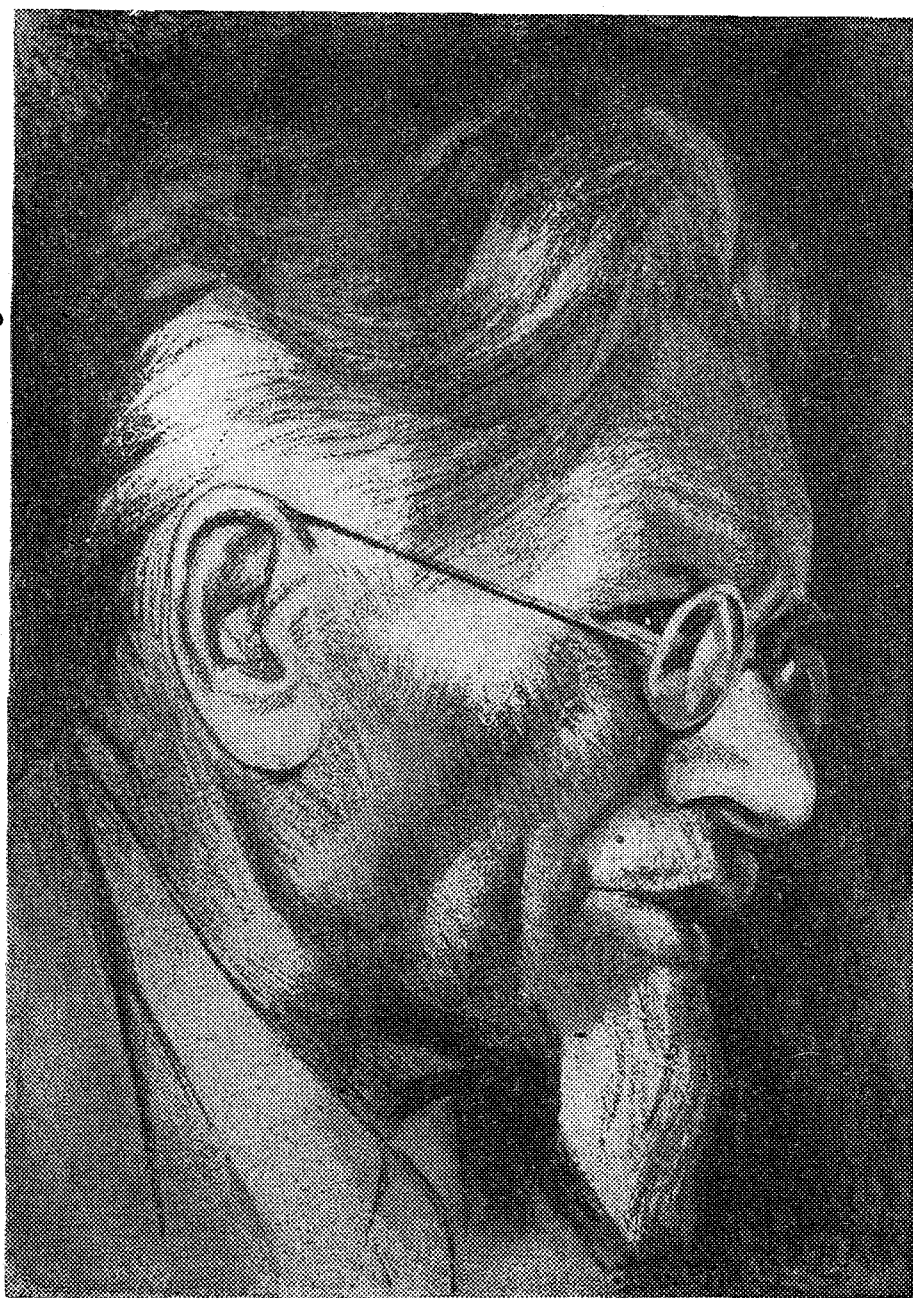
Let us suppose that five men and five women are before you. That would mean that there are ten unexploited concepts of life, ten vague indistinct hopes, ten different attitudes toward you personally.

Each of the five men has his own idea of the type of woman he would like to marry. Each of the women, in turn, has a different conception of what the man of her dreams should be like.

A miserly person will seem to the first man merely thrifty, to the second organically disgusting, to the third he will appear pitiful and unfortunate; the fourth will consider the miser ludicrous, the fifth will compare him to Pliushkin* and will be satisfied with the comparison. The fifth will be the least talented person of all.

One woman sees herself in love with an ascetic and is quite overcome by his asceticism. The second loves a libertine and ennoble him through her love. The third feels that nature played a joke on her when it created her a woman; she does not love men and envies them their freedom. The fourth simply wants to be a mother and a wife; she fully understands this calling, but for some reason or other cannot fulfill it. The fifth takes life in stride

*A character in Gogol's *Dead Souls*.



Mikhail Kalinin: November 20, 1875—June 3, 1946.

without meditating over anything; she causes pain to her dear ones, yet sincerely wonders why and how.

During the course of their lives, these ten have seen many cab-drivers, clerks, mothers and actors. Each of these ten, without ever having noticed it, has a vague conception of the characteristics that are peculiar to cab-drivers, actors, clerks and mothers. Each of these ten must be encouraged to explain, formulate and present his conception in his own way.

And so you have before you ten people just as you see them, as each one sees himself, as each sees the other, and finally as each would like to see himself.

Also, these ten are ambitious—each would like to be noticed in life as much as possible.

You present one of these people with the following problem: "Give me your conception of a person to whom earthly existence appears irredeemably befouled, besmirched. It offends and terrorizes him. He believes in God and in the after-life."

To another you say: "Explain to me your idea of a good woman who regards every man as her son."

You will have before you two characters: one a person who rejects life; the other a woman who considers herself the mistress of the world, the creator of her newly-acquired strength. That which is alive and active will collide with that which is lifeless and passive. Let them give you still another type; a woman, a sort of feminine Don Juan, who, submitting to her purely sexual curiosity, or in her search of an ideal man, strives to attract every man who crosses her path.

Having these characters you have not only the material, but the inevitability of drama. Place these characters one next to the other and they will begin to act—that is, to live.

The second lady will not fail to expose the ascetic to carnal temptations. The first one will be unable to permit a human being to be played with. The ascetic himself will perhaps be captivated by the first, and bewildered by the second. For some time he will perhaps vacillate and swing in the balance like a pendulum. He can be placed in the position of a person who is overcome by the first force and saved by the second. At any rate, life will have to avenge his rejection of life. Life always acts in this way—always and everywhere, except in the lives of religious hermits.

Add several more characters to these three.

You say to the fourth actor: "Describe the character of a flippant and cynical person."

Place him as the brother of the second woman, or as the lover of the first. He will greatly complicate and enliven the drama.

To the fifth you will say: "In contradistinction to the first character, as a contrast, we must have a jolly good fellow who loves life."

To the sixth you will say: "Give me a person whom fate has treated harshly, and who has lost hope. But he regards with a sense of humor both the past and present, and blames no one for his misfortune."

You will ask the seventh to give you a girl who dreams of motherhood and of peaceful family life somewhere in a deserted, isolated part of the world. It seems to her that she can build life simply and beautifully and as life has never been built before.

The eighth, ninth, tenth, etc., will bring into the play a series of dramatic meetings together with a series of episodic characters.

If the characters are firmly drawn, their dramatic collision will be inevitable. For if the ascetic who rejects life should, in a moment of excitement, exclaim: "All the evil that there is in life is due to women; women increase this evil for the sake of one convulsive moment," such an exclamation would be certain to evoke a desire in one woman to destroy this misconception, and in another a desire to get even with him. These two desires will collide—and there you have a drama! But all this could be treated as a comedy. It all depends on how the facts are presented in the process of their development.

IT WOULD be well to remember that under such circumstances the actor becomes not only the creator of a role, but he actually becomes the creator of the play itself. Each creates a character and defends its integrity, which is violated in turn by the influence of other characters who pursue other aims that are perhaps inimical to him. You direct the course of the play just as Moliere did in his day. Often, during rehearsal, he would revise a character originally designated by himself and make it conform to the actor's interpretation. You yourself shorten the dialogue where it is long, and quicken the development of the action where it is slow. You as a spectator can see

Opening Night



Intermission.



Refrègier.

Important People.

more clearly than the cast whether one or another action of a character is sufficiently well founded, whether what he has said is pertinent.

The actors and actresses must be able to explain to themselves the char-

acters that they are portraying. Everything superficial must fall by the wayside in the collision of characters, desires and intentions.

You must be able to foresee and forestall the actors' professional inclinations and ambitions. Each actor will seek to create a role that is professionally most advantageous, and in that way overshadow the completeness and clarity of the other roles—that is, of the other characters. You will have to watch to see that "literature" does not creep into the characterization, that the actors do not inject into the play words, traits, mannerisms, etc., of their own interpretation or those that they may have seen on the stage elsewhere. This "borrowing" may be entirely unconscious, and thereby the more dangerous.

As the dialogue of the play is being worked out, it is jotted down until you have a skeleton of the drama, scene by scene. The literary phase of the play may be entrusted to a professional writer, but this must be avoided wherever possible, striving for perfection both in the dialogue and in the style of the play.

I should suggest that at first you try to work out several simple themes. For example, people are sitting in a room one winter evening awaiting the arrival of a man. This man is on trial in a district court. He may be the father or a relative who is indispensable to the family. They justify his crime, but everyone knows that it was committed. The dialogue could be very interesting; the people could try to convince themselves of something that they do not believe. Of course, the approach could be different. The people could quite honestly regard the person on trial as innocent. Under these circumstances, they could frighten one another with the possibility of a "guilty" verdict. You might be able to show the various degrees of feelings of anticipation and impatience. The man is found innocent and he appears on the stage happy—and drunk.

This man need not be a criminal. He can be a rich relative who is being eagerly awaited with gifts and favors. He appears, and it transpires that he is not the kind of person they had imagined, and there is subsequent disappointment and grief.

A more primitive problem could be presented. Picture students of a drama theater before an examination. Truly dramatic and highly comical moments could be shown here. The people are

sitting and chattering, trying to hide their disturbance and appear nonchalant. Some students are comically self-confident; they are of course without talent. For others, the examinations are a matter of life and death. They are called in for the examination, and later they come out of the examining room. Compassion, jealousy, malice. All feelings could be shown in a brief scene.

FINALLY, I would try to work out a simple comedy taken from life. Let us take the character of a person who is "not in the habit of hurrying." Every problem must be "well thought out" by him. In reality, however, he is naturally lazy and lives "somehow" deeply convinced that "it doesn't make any difference one way or another."

Let us suppose that in the first act he is planning to get married. This plan is being projected for the third time. His courting is an affair of long standing. He knows that one must marry—"everyone marries"—but he is not quite convinced that married life will be better for him than single. He has no father, but he does have a mother, who loves him for his tender character and for the radiant smile that is ever present on his well-fed face. He drinks for two reasons. First, because "everybody drinks," and besides, he doesn't feel like doing anything. He plays cards, a game that is played sitting, and, therefore, one that does not tax his energies.

Several reasons prevent his marrying: the stove in the bedroom has long been smoking; the tailor who was to have sewn his wedding coat went off on a spree and is now being hospitalized; he has no friend in town who could serve as the best man; and finally, the tenant who lives in a wing of the flat is a drunkard who beats his wife, and plays some sort of an exasperating brass trumpet. It is impossible to evict him because he is such a good person, and he still owes six months' rent: on the other hand, it is dangerous to let him stay. The bride comes from a good family and the musician might frighten her; he blasts away far into the night. It will be necessary to go to him and relieve him of his trumpet—and perhaps beat him over the head with it. All in all, there are countless deeds, cares, worries and talks.

At the end of the first act it transpires that the bride has been betrothed to another. The groom is insulted and screams: "To hell with her! I'll get

married anyway. I'll get married—just for spite!"

In the first act the mother, an elderly lady, is shown with her son. She loves her son and admires him. The conversation between them follows:

"I am still young, mother dear; there is no need for me to hurry."

"Don't hurry, then, Kolenka. Only swindlers need hurry."

The musician—when he is sober, life seems frightening and senseless to him; that is why he is always drunk—enters begging:

"May I have my trumpet?"

"Are you going to play that thing at midnight again?"

"Please let me have my trumpet. It's my tool. Even a magistrate can't take it away from me."

"Look here, Herman, why don't you let life alone?"

"I don't bother life. Life bothers me."

The tailor's apprentice enters. He looks at everything as if in a dream; he looks like a man who will be tired for the rest of his life.

THERE is also an unemployed engineer. He is forbidden to build because all of his buildings crumble and squash people to death. He and his sister have come to persuade Nikolai to build a match factory. The man is of a hopeless appearance, and speculates on the folly of his relatives—and even that with apprehension. With him is his sister, a jolly, sprightly widow.

The neighbor, smugly bourgeois, is taken up with foreign affairs. He warns everyone of a possible Chinese invasion.

"You just watch China! I ask you especially to watch the Chinese!"

In the second act Nikolai is married to the engineer's sister. She likes to live gaily. In her house everyone hustles and bustles. Here also is a conductor of an orchestra who literally "sings" about his profound knowledge of music and his magnificent talent. He has a dislocated right arm. There is also a trumpeter, and a dealer in cat fur who is always cursing peasants.

"The muzhiks aren't people. They're a bunch of dreamy, drunken louts. You say to them 'my dear fellow,' and they try to stick you with a pitchfork. They're a bunch of half-wits."

There are also a townsman, a Chinese, and some kind of an illicit deacon, the inventor of an air gun.

"It's something like a wheel—a

wheel and a gun barrel. Give it a twist and it pours them out wherever you like."

The master of the house is an engineer, but he is not quite sure of himself, and he continually makes all kinds of tests in order to ascertain the solidity of his position. At one time he chases out the trumpeter, at another he breaks the stove—to find out why it smokes.

The master of the house is amazed by his own marriage. He is in love with his wife, is afraid of her, and feels that he has married awkwardly.

"Well, mother dear, you rushed me into this."

"No, I didn't rush you into anything."

"Well, you kept talking. . . ."

He is not accustomed to noise and bustle, but submits to merrymaking. He tries to think through that which has taken place, but he is somehow "always late."

"In the last analysis, mother, it's all the same. We'll live through this somehow. . . ."

"Quite a big crowd gathered here. . . ."

"They all want to eat. The chief thing is. . . ."

He is very soft-hearted. Loafing and vagueness are also characteristic of him. His wife brings into the house some kind of jolly ladies. One of them is a former nun, very nice, who keeps planning to go on a pilgrimage.

"I'll wait till I'm older, then I'll go; one lives while one walks."

The engineer is not indifferent to her, but, as a person who is beaten down by life, he is timid.

In the third act, Nikolai's friend appears. He is a merchant, businesslike, who finds pleasure in constructive work. He tells Nikolai that the engineer keeps a sharp eye on him, and has been swindling him. Nikolai is in love with the jolly nun and doesn't quite understand what his friend is trying to say.

"It doesn't matter. Let him . . . I . . . you see . . . I'm not a greedy person. I'm really soft-hearted. I don't

like any kind of racket. I like to be friendly with everyone."

Nikolai's wife listens. She takes her own measures. She makes attempts to turn the friend's head. At first he doesn't yield.

"Madam, I can see through everything."

"See through everything?"

"Absolutely."

"Nikolai, is it all the same to you?"

"All the same. Why?"

"We'll live through it somehow?"

"Why, of course."

"Do you like this?"

The friend says to her:

"One can go to pot with you."

"With me?"

"Generally . . . with everyone here. . . ."

"What do you mean 'to pot'? A person lives once . . . and one must live simply. . . . Isn't that true, Nikolai?"

"What?"

"That one must live simply."

"Of course. . . . You wait . . . here she's saying something that sounds like a fairy-tale."



Meskin.

"Beastly evening. Saw one of those plays that make you think."

THERE is a romance between the nun and the engineer. She got into this love-affair because it's something that one must go through and free oneself from.

There's a fire in the house. Everyone hustles about. The fire doesn't amount to much and is soon put out. During the commotion, Nikolai's wife conducts herself derisively and calmly. Nikolai's friend likes that.

"Well, you're pretty brave. . . ."

From this point begins a jolly romance in which there is nothing binding. The engineer builds the factory. He looks like a man who, after a long abstinence, has finally made his way to the bottle and got drunk. He shouts; he is stupid and ridiculous. At times he realizes that he is stupid and ridiculous, and when he does he becomes embarrassed and is angry with himself. All sorts of tommyrot is going on in the house. Everyone is running about like the soul of a body that has not been buried according to Christian precepts. Through the hilarious noise one can hear the former nun calling on everyone to go somewhere on a pilgrimage. None has his own hinges in life. Everyone turns about everyone else, each expecting something from the other, yet no one is in a position to offer anything to anyone. Everything happens quickly, flimsily, for a short time,

as if for the sake of self-deception.

The fatigue from merrymaking and collapse of life deepens and has its effect on everyone; it is kind to no one.

In the fourth act the mother tells her son that his wife is deceiving him. She points to his friend.

"Just look how they walk in the garden. Do they walk like strangers?"

At first Nikolai is offended.

"Oh, you mischief-maker. . . . And he is such a businessman, so practical, as if. . . ."

"She's responsible for all this. . . ."

Nikolai goes out in search of the nun. He finds her near the engineer in a pose that upsets and offends him.

"What kind of people are you?" he cries.

"Neither better nor worse than you," the nun explains. "We, too, have no place to go. . . ."

"Who is it that twists us about?" Nikolai asks.

The nun explains that people twist themselves—and it is only because they have no love for anything. Nothing binds them to life, and they are found wanting.

"And are you bound to anything?"

"I? I love the earth. If I were a man I would travel the world round, and would touch and caress it everywhere."

The engineer's structure, over which the trumpeter was supposed to have watched, burns down. The engineer feels beaten and is filled with remorse

before his sister and Nikolai. The trumpeter is drunk, and screams: "I'm responsible for everything. Here is proof: my cap went up in smoke. Here I am! Judge me!"

The mother weeps. "We're ruined, Nikolushka. We've been pauperized. . . ."

"We've always been paupers," the bride says to her. "Only before we were paupers with money, and now, without."

Her lover, drunk as she, and made dizzy by his senseless existence, also laughs at the friend.

"You're an idler, Nikolai. It's good that need will press you now."

Nikolai is frightened and loses himself. He feels slighted by the nun. He feels ashamed before his mother, yet he pities her. He squeals and cries. Everyone loses himself in the face of misfortune. They are weak and ridiculous. They begin to plan a new life, to dream of something which is impossible in real life.

Nikolai is silent. He shuffles from one corner to another, thinking of something. His answers aren't to the point. Suddenly, he says to his mother in a corner:

"Mother dear, let's go to the pilgrimage. We can't live here anyway."

"With us gone, they'll ransack everything."

"What's there to ransack? It's all the same. . . ."

He hurries his mother, instilling in

her the fear that he's gone mad. She submits to his desires and secretly prepares him for the journey. In the house everyone has been reconciled. Everyone is happy, dreaming of tomorrow's merrymaking. The nun tells the engineer the road from Ryazan to Kursk is good.

Nikolai leaves with his mother unnoticed. Their last words are:

"Oh, I forgot to take my watch. . . ."

"What do you need the watch for, Nikolai? We can go by the sun."

"Well, then, we'll live by the sun. . . . It doesn't matter!"

HERE you will find many ready-made, suggestive words, but you can disregard them; they need not bind you to anything. The characters and the theme can also be changed by the actors beyond recognition during the process of their development. I only gave you ground upon which, with collective effort, you can build any structure you like.

Only one thing is important: The untouched strata of personal impressions which lie in the soul of every man, and which usually rot fruitlessly, or are formed by someone else's words, forms; prompted by a book, by the eloquence of a comrade, or by the influence of a woman you love—must be made to live and brought into motion.

Translated by Mark O. Strevver.

DRAVA BRIDGE

What thrust of fate had brought this wounded man to lie there at their feet? "We did not know his name and you will never find his grave."

By PALMER THOMPSON

How many armies there were in that corner of Europe I wouldn't like to say. If you took one hand from each man in my tank crew, you still wouldn't have enough fingers to count the nations whose children limped and fled in panic, fought for bread and lost the will to live in this rich, well-watered pocket of land.

No man was more than a moment of consuming grief, and few more than the pain in their reiterating feet. None of them knew where the roads

they were marching ended, any more than they understood the forces which had taken them to the white battlefields of the Ukraine and to jagged Montenegro. You will not find their names in history, although they were the soil that was tilled and harrowed and in which great factions grew. You will never find their graves.

Our army had been laid on the wide anvil of the desert and fashioned by the hammer of the sun. And then the way up Italy, back in Europe again, but

whether we came from Durham or Mile End there was nothing in the country for an Englishman to understand. The way the land was watered was all wrong. The streams were abrupt ugly gashes the width of a small Bailey, and they dried when the autumn cloudbanks ceased to curse. The big rivers stood still and smelled. Whenever we made our bivvies it was in an olive-grove or perhaps a vineyard with the leaves tired and yellowing and all the roadside muffled thickly



Jean Bart.

in dust so that a hurrying donkey-cart looked like a Roman legion on the march and the skivvy of a startled lizard left a sullen puff like rifle-smoke in the air. I can remember no trees taller than our aerials except for the cypresses in the cemeteries.

That was before we reached this place. When we drove up to the mountains it was like coming to the Gates of Hell. I don't say that for effect. It was like coming to the Gates of Hell. The mountains stood up erect from the plain with black scarred faces. The sky was sagging with impending thunder and black, so that it seemed that some great tank was burning behind the mountains and belching a volume of coarse diesel fumes. And when the lightning at length came it was as if the flames had found the ammunition racks and flushed the cordite into a short white gasp, while overhead heavy guns argued our destiny. It seemed to us that there could be no way through when we were in the pass. It was like looking up the barrel of a gun when someone puts a round in and shuts the breech.

When we came out of the pass it took us some moments to understand.

This was when we first began to believe that the war had ended. Here were young green oak trees and beech woods. Here the grass was as green as an English water-meadow and the streams were clear and continually making laughter. Here were clean white villages and cattle swaying a loaded bag of milk. This was surely the richest plateau in Europe, where men might trail their fingers in the fertile earth and multiply their wealth, and we might find rest from soldiering. It was like coming out of a long spell of action, and laying your cheek into the earth and smelling the roots of grasses before you are asleep.

The perspectives of time and prejudice, experience and space, could not focus these people in our understanding into simple and cohesive terms. For us they were the newsprint, the digits and the symbols, caught like paper in a blast furnace, and now the flakes of dissolving ash seized and thrown outward by the hurrying tempests of heated air. Some would have called it a jest of the gods and a handful of blowing sand. Others would have been satisfied with statistics and the mathematics of fascist

oppression and defeat. Certainly it might be said that they had once been Greeks, Germans, Cossacks, Slovenes, Poles. Or that they were plague-carriers. Or a migrant body of the creature man, dying in Central Europe for want of bread. Or a transport problem. Or pregnant widows and orphaned sons and divided lovers. Or fascists and slaveworkers, peasants and traitors. Or, more simply, the human cud which was all that remained of the German armies, slobbering from the dead but still warm jaws of the fascist war.

No man was more than an instant of returning pain, and few were more than wastes in a desert where all green strivings had withered into apathy. Their skies were grey and overcast with continual hunger, and their horizons numb with the enclosing monotony of defeat. They were the husks of the people of Europe, and their spirits had been threshed and ground in war.

Only the winds which blew them were still man-made winds—the winds of propaganda and man-made panic, the curses of their officers, a voice on the radio saying:

"The Bolsheviks, the Bolsheviks! You must move west, or the Bolsheviks will take from you all we have left to you—life!"

CARRYING the load of melting snow-fields, the Drava runs swift and deep, yellow and sinewy as the arm of a Chinese peasant. Sometimes the forests lean over from the mountain-sides and look down steep cliffs at the churn of water. Sometimes the land collapses like cloth in leisurely folds of wheat-scape on either side. Occasionally a wooden bridge crosses the stream, its supporting posts tugging like oarsmen against the heavy water.

Somewhere to the east we knew there were the landscapes of the Danube, there rolled the cornlands of Hungary. Somewhere to the east was the Red Army, advancing with its burden of grief and anger, each individual soldier carrying with his rifle his visions of blackened and wasted labor, each peasant carrying like a cast in his eye the memory of fascist abuse and of Russian dead.

Up from the south and in among us thrust the Partisans—Yugoslavs and Italians, men whose only nationality was hate for fascism, whose only profession was belief in man. Their conversation was resistance, their tongues were the implements of war, their currency was blood.

"Ah! Our comrades! Our allies in the war for freedom! We have met at last, comrades, we have won our twenty years' war with the beast! This is a day for laughing, indeed! This is a day to kill fascists!"

I ask you to consider—how could we understand the humor of these ragged men? We who had come from the mines of Durham and who had fought a concise and methodical war in the parched throat of Italy—we had only been puzzled and dismayed by the random selection Death made from our company. He had come among us at night, accidentally and unprovoked, and in the morning we had buried the meat of a rejoicing friend. How could we understand these ragged peasants, who walked in the dawn of a new world as if each step they took was a gigantic oath affirming the victory of man? How could we return their generous and unqualified love?

So we stood on the wooden bridges, watching the Drava hurrying the snow-fields off to Hungary, seeing only the misery and the pity as the chaff of the richest granaries of Europe blew past us

down the roads. Wherever we walked we saw the litter of their discarded arms. Only the grey-blue of their tattered uniforms startled at times in us the reflex to the color, enemy, already dulled and echoing in a week of dividing experience and time. Certainly it might be said that they were Croat conscripts marching in tight formation, while behind them their officers rode and cracked their whips and cursed them into panic, and, behind again, there followed their womenfolk and children, white with the indignity of fifty centuries of war.

"Englishman, if you give me bread for my child you may use my body. Oh, twenty Englishmen may use my body! Oh, let the great Drava River use my body! Together we can give birth to no monster worse than this fascist war."

But there were no men and women left among them, and not one of them was any more than a moment of consuming grief.

And so, when the order came, we who had come from the desert and Mile End held the bridge against these man-made winds—not in the pride of our conviction but in the resignation of our uniform. These men were no more a transport problem, but the terms of a military agreement, signed in a hotel lounge. They were the prisoners of our allies. They were the wages of the Partisans, thrusting up from their fierce majestic frontier, laughing at the victory of man. They must not cross the Drava which marked the division of our separate military zones.

This was surely the richest plateau in Europe where men might stretch out their arms and multiply their wealth, and we might find rest from soldiering. Here the grass flowered into butter and the woods exclaimed with birds. Here on the Drava bridge we marked in crooked rolls of dannatt wire the signature of a treaty signed in a hotel lounge. And panic blew the chaff of Europe against this wire, and on the further bank of the Drava there gathered the abandoned implements of Nazi power. I am speaking of men and women. I am telling you about the cud of war.

And some cast their bodies into the churning water and swam to the West, away from the figures of speech imitated in the moving coil of a headphone and the curses of officers crazed with fear. And after a thousand separate reflexes of physical anguish, their bodies swelled the load of sand and brush-

wood, and were swept down to the Danube valley where the Red Army camped among its memories of the black Ukraine.

A MAN crawled up the wooden planking of the bridge and faced us through the wire. He spoke to us in Greek and German or Croat, but the words we heard were the soft welling of blood from the wounds in his chest and the silent footsteps of annihilation in his eyes.

The Partisans thrust up the bridge, affirming victory with striding oaths, mocking the oaken scaffold with their conquering boots. How could we understand the sacred anger of these ragged men?

We stood in the resignation of our uniform, pointing hostility at them with our levelled arms, listening to the wounds of the man at our feet.

"He is our prisoner," said the Partisans. "Why do you threaten us? We will take him back with us to the east bank of the Drava River."

"He is wounded," we said. "We will send the man to hospital."

"He is a fascist. He is an officer of the Ustasha."

"He is dying. He is an orphaned son."

"He is a target for our justice. He is vermin. He is a stain on the history of man."

"He is a son of man."

"He is a fascist, condemned by his own men, the men he whipped to jagged Montenegro and the battlefields of the Ukraine. Pah! He is not worth this spit I toss into the yellow Drava."

"And his men?"

"They are peasants, the chaff of history. We will make them citizens and heroes."

"And this man?"

"This is no longer a man. He has spent his human rights."

"He is wounded," we said. "The war is over."

"The victory is beginning," they said. "This is a day for killing fascists. This is a day for laughter, my friends."

Twelve standing oarsmen thrust us upstream, against the weight of glaciers at the river's source. On either side of our scaffolding collapsed the lawns of germinating bread, and the green abundance of cultivated earth. None of us knew who had built the bridge, nor had any of us been born in this pocket of land. None of us had chosen to come to this place, nor to leave our homes in Durham or Belgrade;



we stood here through the will of history and the obstinate ache to fulfillment in our sprouting seed. Around us we felt the watching peace of the land, and overhanging us we knew the dome of time.

We did not know the name of the wounded man and you will never find his grave. We did not know what chance of character, and influence of upbringing and thrust of history had fused to lay him at our feet. He lay between us, marking the frontiers of our allied faiths. It might be said that he was an officer of the Ustasha, remembering a past of crimes; or that he was the son thrown of a mother, aching to achieve the promise in his seed; or a wounded body, an instant of pain studding eternity; or a fraction of consciousness, laid on the wooden planks of the Drava bridge, reflecting in the terms of his spirit the yellow water and the rich crust of a planet and the over-arching sky.

And so we debated whether this receptive lens of life should be shattered on the Drava bridge or whether it should watch over the passing of another twenty years. And the issues that we argued were man-made issues, the colors of our uniforms and the signature of a treaty, scrawled across a bridge of dannatt wire; but interwoven with our words was the curse of fifty centuries of war, and the question of the future of man.

"He is a fascist," said the ragged peasants. "He will breed more vermin in the world."

"He is a wounded man, we said.

"He lies on our side of the wire," they said. "He is our prisoner and a target for our justice."

Against the timeless silence of the valley, underlined by the inconspicuous loquacity of a thousand tributary waterfalls, we heard the rifle-shots of momentary and particular anger. We knew that somehow a life had been cast out, by the mechanics of a tube of steel. The Drava clutched the body in its strong peasant fingers, and thrust it down to the Red Army and the Danube plain. And we who had come from Durham and Mile End saw only the pity of it and our own mortality. For we had not yet learned the generosity of human anger, extinguishing the indignity of war; nor had we understood the creative hate of the people of Europe, cultivating the future like the wheatlands of the Drava, and killing weeds like men.

WHAT BRITAIN PLANS FOR INDIA

The meaning of the new British Cabinet offer to India: liberation or continued domination?

By S. H. KAVIANI

AFTER the British government threw the Golden Apple into the Indian arena on May 16, some of my American friends expressed gratification at the British gesture. "After all," they told me, "the British did fulfill their long overdue pledge and granted freedom to your country." But when I asked them to explain the contradiction between London's reactionary foreign policy and the voluntary transfer of the "brightest jewel in the British crown" to Indians, my friends seemed puzzled. In other words, I asked, has Mr. Atlee really become His Majesty's Prime Minister "to preside over the liquidation of the British Empire?"

But first a brief picture of the background. India is a vast subcontinent. This subcontinent is a British colony. It is divided into British India and Princely India, with British India consisting of eleven provinces. These provinces are not at all national units based on any ethnological division of the country. They were haphazardly formed in the nineteenth century just for administrative purposes. The British government rules India through a Viceroy, who is responsible to no Indian body but to the British Cabinet. He appoints an executive council of eleven to advise him on administrative affairs. This executive council functions only at his discretion *and is not responsible to the Indian legislature*. The Viceroy has vast executive and legislative powers; he can and often does veto acts passed by the Indian legislature. The central government is the sole responsibility of the Viceroy. The British government appoints governors for provinces who are responsible to the Viceroy, and who are equally omnipotent.

Princely India comprises one-third of India. Scattered all over India are 562 misnamed "states" which were created by the British in the eighteenth

and nineteenth centuries. Every state is a British protectorate and the princes rule at the pleasure of the Viceroy. The Viceroy appoints his "agents" in these "states," and these agents are the real rulers. No prince can enforce any reforms or laws without the previous permission of the agent.

There are two main political parties in India—the Indian National Congress and the Moslem League. They are political and not religious parties and represent millions of Indian people. The third biggest party in the country is the Communist Party. Each one of these parties stands for the independence of India. The Moslem League also demands Pakistan—the right of the Moslems to form independent sovereign states in areas where they form the majority of the population. The Congress Party opposes this demand. In addition to these parties, there is an All-India Trade Union Congress representing 5,000,000 industrial workers, and the All-India Peasant Party.

DURING the last five or six years, in spite of mass starvation, mass arrests, mass shooting and complete suppression of civil liberty by the alien and irresponsible British administration, India's liberation movement has grown enormously. Never were the British so much hated as they are today. The Labor members of the Parliamentary Delegation which visited India last winter, in speaking of their experiences, admitted in London that "recent events like the naval mutiny [when Indians captured twenty-six British ships] and riots in Bombay and Calcutta are just symptomatic of the coming explosion."

It is this pressure of mass upheaval which has forced the British to readjust their relations with India. Obviously they do not want to make the same mistakes their forefathers did

in dealing with the Americans almost two hundred years ago. Attlee seems to be cleverer than George III. He does not want to lose all; he would rather bargain with the Indian leadership.

The British claim that since the two Indian parties—the Congress and the Moslem League—did not agree to any joint formula despite six weeks of British efforts, the British had themselves to offer a formula which might satisfy the demands of both parties. But the fact is that long before the cabinet mission went to India, the British government had completed a plan which was made not to satisfy any of the Indian parties but to protect British interests. The purpose of the mission

and the deliberations with Indian leaders was to create a state of affairs in which this plan would look quite natural to Indians so they would accept it.

The author of this plan is Professor Coupland. He is adviser to the India Office in London and went to India as Secretary to Sir Stafford Cripps in 1942. Since then he has written a large book called *The Indian Problem*. According to Prof. Coupland, India should be divided into three separate dominions: the Hindu zone, the Moslem zone and the Princely zone. He emphasizes the importance of the Princely zone. There the British would have their bases and military establishments. When this plan was exposed by the Indian press, a revised edition

of the book was published by the government in India just before the recent Simla conference. In this edition, the Coupland Plan was slightly modified and a union of the three zones was proposed. Thus it will be seen that the British government had made up its mind regarding India's future long before the Cabinet mission discussed Indian problems with native leaders. As a matter of fact, the Coupland Plan was prepared during Churchill's regime in 1943. Attlee and Bevin are faithfully carrying out Churchill's policy in India, as elsewhere.

There was another weapon which the British used to create the necessary atmosphere for bargaining with the Indians. This was the bogey of Soviet "expansion." Although the campaign of slander against the Soviet Union has been going on for years, it reached new heights in the last eight or nine months. British officials and the British controlled news agencies tried to convince the Indian people that as soon as British protection was removed the "Russian bear" would walk in.

It is only in this perspective that an evaluation of the British proposals can properly be made. They may be divided into two parts: Interim and Permanent.

ACCORDING to the proposals "an interim government may be set up at once to carry on the administration of British India until such time as the new constitution can be brought into being." This government would have "the support of the major political parties," and would function under the provisions of the Government of India Act of 1935. According to this Act the central government is the exclusive responsibility of the Viceroy, appointed by the British government and responsible only to the British Secretary of State for India. It is under such a dictator that the interim government would operate. The British have so far refused to give any assurance that the Viceroy will not use his "special powers" or will always abide by the advice of his Executive Councillors.

There is also the question of the withdrawal of the British army from India. Congress President Maulana Azad and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru have rightly pointed out that "there can be no independence so long as there is a foreign army on Indian soil." The British government is avoiding this is-



Sketched in India by Howard Baer.

sue. Indian leaders are told that the question of the British army in India may be postponed for "some later date." It should be noted that the number of British troops in India has trebled since 1939 and numbers approximately 400,000. Finally, no time limit is fixed for the Interim Government in the proposals; the Viceroy can prolong its existence indefinitely on one pretext or the other.

The following constitute the basis for the permanent arrangement:

1. There would be a Union of India, embracing both British India and the States, which would deal with the foreign affairs, defense and communications.

2. The Union would have executive and legislative branches constituted from British Indian and States representatives.

3. All other than Union matters and all residuary powers would be vested in the Provinces.

4. It would be necessary to negotiate a treaty between the Union Constituent Assembly and the United Kingdom to provide for certain problems arising out of the transfer of powers.

5. There would be a constitution-making body elected from the members of the provincial legislative assemblies. Moslem and Sikh members of the assemblies would vote for their representatives separately.

The same British government which insists that even former collaborators and fascists be given the right of franchise in Bulgaria and Rumania, so that their Parliaments will be "truly" representative, deprives eighty-nine percent of the adult Indian population of the right to elect their representatives to the Constituent Assembly. Only eleven percent of the adult population has the right to elect representatives to these provincial assemblies. The British admit that "the most satisfactory method obviously would be an election based on adult franchise, *but any attempt to introduce such a step now would lead to wholly unacceptable delay in the formation of the new constitution.*" (My emphasis.) This excuse of "delay" is pure nonsense. Elections to the provincial assemblies were held after ten years. Elections to the central legislatures were held after twelve years. Was this "delay" acceptable to the Indians? Is the government so anxious to part with power that it does not want to delay the Con-

stituent Assembly for even two months so that it may be elected on the basis of adult universal franchise? The main reason for refusing this democratic method of convening a Constituent Assembly is that the British find the representatives of the upper strata of society more convenient to deal with. They are afraid lest the common people elect more progressive representatives and thus their game be exposed.

Never has a Constituent Assembly been more restricted than the British-proposed Constituent Assembly for India. The most important point regarding this Constituent Assembly is that—according to Lord Pethwick-Lawrence, Secretary of State for India—it *will not be a sovereign body*. When asked to define its powers, his lordship said, "The constitution-making body will frame a constitution subject to the approval of the British Parliament which must be satisfied that rights of minorities are properly safeguarded and a treaty with the British government has been provided for. This point was explicitly put in Item 22 of the proposals."

The Constituent Assembly will be composed of 170 Hindus, seventy-nine Moslems and ninety-three representatives of the Princes. Thus no one group will enjoy an absolute majority in the Assembly. And it is also interesting to note that while the Hindu and Moslem representatives will be elected by provincial assemblies, the representatives of Princely India will be nominated by the Princes.

Considering the hostility the British have created between the Congress and the Moslem League in pursuit of their policy of divide and rule, it is extremely unlikely that the two groups will unite inside the Constituent Assembly; thus the ninety-three Princely representatives will hold the balance, keep the Hindus and Moslems at loggerheads and thereby possibly shape the new constitution in favor of the British imperialist interests which they actually represent.

The Princes will share power in the Union government, but the Union government will have no right to interfere in the internal affairs of Princely India. The secret memorandum submitted by the Chamber of Princes and accepted by the Cabinet mission clearly points out that the "monarchical system and dynastic rights of the rulers of Indian States will not be affected by the new scheme. With regard to

the internal administration of States, there will be no interference either by the British government or by the new government." This constitutional monstrosity can only be possible under the British. To unite a democratic British India with totally autocratic and irresponsible Princedom, to give the latter a deciding voice in the Constituent Assembly and a share in the Union government, while protecting their monarchical and totally unrepresentative governments, is the height of mockery.

SINCE it is essential to sign a treaty with the British as provided for by Item 22, we must look at the treaties the British government has signed with Iraq (1932), Egypt (1936), and Trans-Jordan (1946) before granting them "freedom." Each one of these treaties guards the "right" of the British to establish and maintain their armies and air ports inside these "sovereign states." These "independent" states have even undertaken to provide all facilities of transport and communications to these armies. Naturally the British expect Indians to sign a similar treaty, which will guarantee Britain's economic and military domination over India and leave the Indians the husk.

The British Cabinet mission has also proposed the grouping of provinces into three sections. Nothing has been said about British Baluchistan, which is overwhelmingly Moslem and which has not been granted even the status of a province despite a resolution of the Central Assembly. This area, as large as Switzerland, is governed by a British agent and the military and is without any representative body. Instead of regrouping the provinces on a national basis, the British have found it convenient to perpetuate the problems of national minorities in these groups, which always provides them with an excuse to interfere in the internal affairs of these provinces.

The Moslem League has accepted the British proposals and it is probable that the Congress party will also accept them. A dominant group in the Congress is eager to join hands with the British for economic and political reasons. Since last year this group has been aligning itself with the Princes, the mill owners, the landlords and black marketeers. It is more alarmed over the rise of progressive forces in India than it is over British oppression. The

Moslem League leadership is also following the same opportunistic path. The real trouble will come if the Congress also accepts the British plan. Because the Congress and the League will not be joining the interim government in a spirit of mutual understanding they will quarrel over the distribution of portfolios, etc. The Moslem League claims to be the sole representative of all the Moslems. Therefore it will demand that only the League have the right to nominate the Moslem members of the Viceroy's Executive Council. The Congress disagrees with the League's position and will insist that it have the right to nominate one or two Moslems. The Congress also opposes the League's demand for a fifty-percent share of the representatives in the Executive Council.

The Communists and other powerful progressive forces consider the British proposals a trap. They are appealing to the Congress and the League to unite against the common foe on the basis of the following counter-proposals:

1. The test of British sincerity will

require an immediate declaration in unambiguous and unequivocal terms that India is henceforth free and independent.

2. In further proof of their earnestness, the British must undertake to withdraw all troops from India, including Princely India, within six months.

3. The British should establish a provisional government responsible to the Indian legislature.

4. This provisional government should convene a Constituent Assembly within six months based on universal adult franchise.

5. It should be composed of elected representatives both from British India and Princely India.

6. This Constituent Assembly should be a sovereign body responsible only to the Indian people.

7. The differences between the Congress and the Moslem League can only be settled by the just application of the right of self-determination. Therefore the provisional government should be charged with the task of setting up a

Boundaries Commission to redraw the boundaries of the provinces on the basis of natural ancient homelands of every people so that the new provinces become, as far as possible, linguistically and culturally homogenous national units.

8. The people of each such national unit should have the unfettered right of self-determination, the right to decide freely whether they would like to join the Indian Union or form a separate sovereign state.

9. The delegates from each unit to the Constituent Assembly should decide by majority vote whether their unit will join the All-India Constituent Assembly to form an Indian Union or secede from it.

10. The peoples of Princely India should have the similar right to elect their representatives to the Constituent Assembly, and the right to decide whether they want to join the central Indian Union or some other sovereign Indian group.

11. All political prisoners, numbering several thousands, should be immediately released.

ROUGH, TOUGH AND ANGRY

Here was a moment alive with history ... a Negro people's convention appeals to the United Nations against intolerable oppression in U. S.

By ABNER W. BERRY

Detroit

RAIN fell in windblown spouts. Automobiles splashed through water that couldn't flow down the clogged sewers. Detroit's Golden Jubilee, celebrating fifty years of the automobile industry, was washed out for the day. The expensive trappings, including gold paint on the downtown streets, had cost the city \$100,000, but now were sodden under the dreary deluge. Gaiety moved indoors, into the downtown hotel suites where the magnates and their satellites sipped warming liquors and dined in lavish style. That was Friday, May 31, 1946.

On the morning of that day a thousand delegates came together in the Rackham Memorial Building auditorium. They had come at the call of the National Negro Congress to its Tenth Anniversary Convention. Representing a cross section of American Negroes and progressive labor, they had come as people keeping an ap-

pointment with destiny. They weren't rained out; they proceeded to business. They listened as Dr. Max Yergan, NNC president, traced the ten-year history of the organization. Dr. Yergan reminded them of the first convention held in February 1936, during a Chicago blizzard. Hitler had been in power for three years and the CIO was just being organized; the four insurgent Spanish generals had not then completed their plans for civil war, and Roosevelt was locked in battle with the economic royalists. The National Negro Congress had taken its stand on all these issues. And events since then have proved the progressive labor movement and the Negro people were in step with history.

The delegates saw themselves through the report of their president. They also saw their mistakes. The National Negro Congress, they were told, had not sufficiently implemented its

perspectives with organization; it had not fought resolutely enough the Jim Crow practices of the armed forces during the war; had not anticipated the reactionary drive against the Negro people and the labor movement and had underestimated the militant temper of the people to fight for their rights.

It was left for Revels Cayton, NNC executive secretary, to give the organizational proposals, to put the convention to work. Cayton, a stocky, confident seaman, who left his post as vice-president of the California State CIO Council to assume the NNC office, told the delegates what sort of organization he envisioned. He's the sort of man whose voice one expects to boom, but instead it flows in a Western nasal, high-pitched and with staccato rhythm. He tells the delegates how proud he is of the working-class core among them; how glad he is to

see "the Negro working class assume its class dignity and its role as leader of the people." His tone is that of a mother boasting of a son's successes. Then he tells the assembly that the NNC "cannot be an office organization, nor a parlor organization;" the times require "that we be rough, tough and angry." He concludes with the plea: "*Let us really deal a death blow to Jim Crow!*"

That's how the sessions began. Then came the working committees, commissions and panels. But people have to eat and there was the rain outside and the flooded streets. Car owners among the delegates helped to solve that. They ferried groups to restaurants and these groups in turn brought back sandwiches and drinks to those who were marooned.

Hundreds of delegates were attracted to the splendid art exhibit "Negro Life in America" at the Urban League which was sponsored by NEW MASSES in conjunction with the NNC. Of some seventy-five artists exhibiting, twenty-five were Negroes; the work of both famous and new painters was presented. A fine new talent was revealed—that of the painter Hughie Lee Smith, Ford foundry worker and Negro veteran. Worker, art patron and critic alike stopped to view his work and word about him spread through the convention hall. The delegations from Chicago and St. Louis took time out from the busy sessions to

plan for bringing the exhibit to their cities. Here was a real example of art as a weapon—a weapon of striking power against Jim Crow.

It was still raining Friday night, but the auditorium of Cass Technical High School was filled for the mass meeting. The meeting matched the weather—it was an angry meeting. The speeches were barbed. When Secretary-treasurer George Addes of the UAW expressed his disappointment at the fact that the General Motors contract (negotiated by Walter Reuther) left out a no-discrimination clause, the audience rumbled approvingly. Greatest amount of applause greeted Addes' quotation from the UAW executive board's statement of policy against "Negro-baiting, Jew-baiting, Catholic- and Red-baiting."

The chairman, Dr. Yergan, introduced "the Honorable Benjamin J. Davis, Jr., member of the New York City Council, member of the National Committee of the Communist Party, member of the National Executive Committee of the National Negro Congress." Wild applause. A man from Georgia sitting next to me murmured: "I know his family down home. His daddy was a good speaker. Hope he's as good." What he really meant was that the people are angry, and they wanted that anger articulated. They wanted the lynch tree uprooted; they wanted the Jim Crow

sign torn down; they wanted to broadcast to the world that they were ready to fight for peoples' freedom everywhere; they wanted Truman and Byrnes and du Pont and Morgan and Connally and Vandenberg and all who seek an imperialist world with America on top of the heap—they wanted them to know that the Negro people and the labor movement were fighting mad about how peace and freedom were being manhandled. And they wanted to know what could be done. Ben Davis told them. And Paul Robeson did that and more.

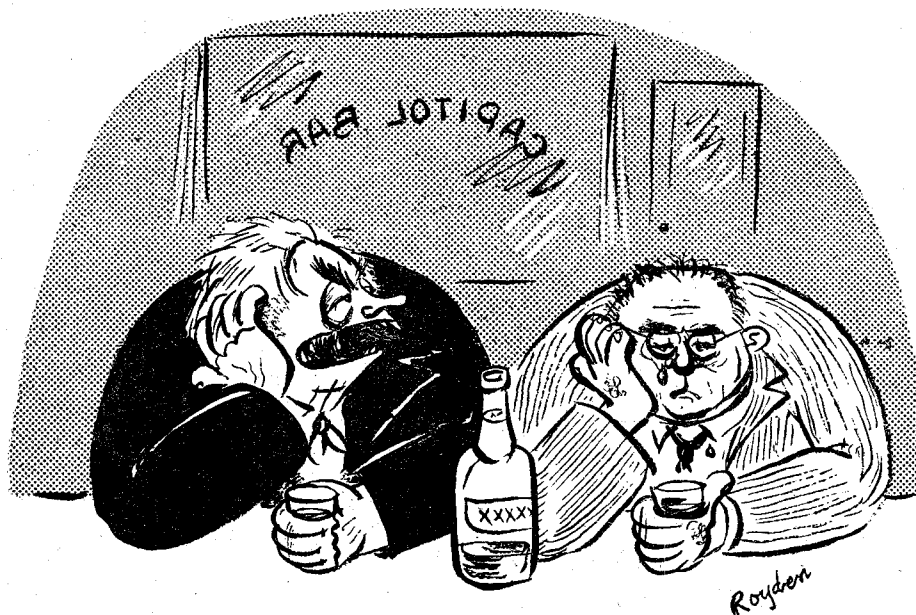
When Robeson appeared in the wings of the stage he received a standing ovation. As I stood with the crowd I thought of what a taxi companion, a steel worker from Cleveland, had asked me on the way to the meeting. "Say, is this Robeson guy really *with* our program? He's a mighty big man, you know." Any feeble answer I could have given him was more than made up for by Robeson himself. His broadcast speech read like an angry poem against the oppressors of man, and he read it like a call to battle.

All Detroit was buzzing on Saturday morning. The conversation at the Negro eating places was all about the Robeson speech. The Detroit *Free Press* tipped its hat to the NNC with an "up-from-slavery" good-will editorial. (The *Free Press* has been notorious recently for its anti-labor editorials spread over its entire editorial page. And incidentally it has been no crusader for Negro rights in Jim Crow-ridden Detroit.)

The weather was still grouchy. Water stood in the side streets, and there were intermittent rains. The auto magnates were determined to go through with their Jubilee, however, and ancient horseless buggies congregated on Woodward Avenue for the Jubilee parade. There was a circus-like atmosphere in which decorated floats, gas-filled balloons and gay streamers vied for attention with the chugging high-wheeled carriages.

Inside the Rackham Building the atmosphere was different. The delegates were in their seats at 9:30 A.M. Officials and workers brought in armfuls of mimeographed sheets and placed them on the press tables down front. After a few committees reported the chairman announced the next order of business—discussion of a petition to the United Nations. Couriers were sent to gather delegates from committee rooms and corridors. The mime-

Sen. Rankst Says:



"Why d'ya suppose nobody likes us, Bilgebo?"

ographed petition was distributed and Revels Cayton was called upon to introduce it.

HERE was a moment alive with history. Before us stood a grandson of Hiram Revels, Negro Reconstruction Senator from Mississippi, introducing to a Negro people's convention of 1946 a document requesting a world body to act on conditions which "Negro citizens find intolerable." As Cayton read the introductory passages, delegate after delegate filed to a seat on tiptoe, leaned forward to catch each word. He read the letter to President Truman:

"The Negro people had hoped that out of the war there would come an extension of democratic rights and liberties so heroically fought for by all oppressed peoples. Your administration, however, has reversed the democratic program of the Roosevelt government, both internally and in relation to foreign policy. . . . Negro citizens find the present conditions intolerable, and are therefore presenting their appeal to the highest court of mankind—the United Nations."

To each delegate there came the realization that *he* was being transformed into a point on the world agenda. Two giant fists—one black, one white—were pounding the UN conference tables. In that document thirteen million questions arose to plague the Soviet-baiters, the Franco defenders, the special pleaders for Bulgarian reaction and Greek royalists, the imperialist masters of colonial millions.

Edward Strong was called by Cayton to read the petition in full. Strong, a former executive secretary of the

NNC, is a veteran of over two years service in India. His bronze-brown face and tall frame are well known to the organized youth movement, especially in churches and colleges. In his clipped, crisp speech he seemed to lift the words from the paper and hurl them one by one at reaction. Every word was a dart and every dart found its mark. After the legal arguments and citations, which had been prepared by a committee of lawyers, the three-page petition asks that the UN "take such . . . steps as may seem just and proper to the end that the oppression of the American Negro be brought to an end." Documenting the petition was a comprehensive statement, "The Oppression of the American Negro: the Facts," prepared by Dr. Herbert Aptheker, noted historian, which presented the stark realities of economic, social and political discrimination and exploitation of the Negro people "based upon the inhuman, unscientific, fascist theory of 'racism'."

Even as Edward Strong spoke the words of the petition were flowing into the newsrooms of the nation and the world. And after a late session Saturday night and a short sleep the delegates arose to discover that they had written a bit of history. By newspaper and radio the world knew that American Negroes were appealing to the world against a condition entirely incompatible with democracy. This was no propaganda stunt, either. The delegates meant business. They set about to raise \$200,000 within the next three months to back up the campaign; a considerable sum was raised on the spot and more was pledged within twenty-four hours.

To illustrate the temper of the delegates here are two scenes from the floor: One of the reports spoke of "the Negro people getting their fair share." A Negro woman UAW delegate from Detroit took the floor to ask: "What is our fair share?" Then she went on, "When we talk about 'fair share' it seems to me that we are encouraging the quota system. I say that our fair share of democracy—and that means everything we need—is full and equal participation—I mean full equality." Her point carried unanimously.

In the Michigan caucus the group chairman asked the delegates for financial pledges. They immediately passed a motion to canvass the house. In a few minutes over \$350 in cash was collected; some \$200 was to be turned



Sanford.

in the following day. There was an elderly woman seated directly behind me at the meeting who beamed and applauded throughout the meeting. I whispered to her that I was surprised that our hundred-man delegation had done so well in the collection. I had been frankly surprised when a queue formed of five- and ten-dollar donors. But the old lady took it all for granted. She answered with some impatience, "Why, we are ready for action. All we need is to know from the leaders what is to be done. You just tell us what to do, show us what to do. We are ready to fight for freedom—and we'll pay for it, too."

Riding home on the bus after Sunday's sessions I chatted with a neighbor. He had heard the Robeson broadcast. How did he like it? He searched for the answer and then slowly and deliberately, like a person composing, he said: "You know, when I heard that speech I thought to myself that I had thought some of the things he was saying but I just couldn't say 'em. It's really good to have people like Paul Robeson. He's smart and he says the things the people like me want to say but just can't get the things out." Then he looked at me quizzically and asked, "You understand how that is, don't you?"

And Birds

When I went in I wanted a plane
I wanted to stroke a cloud
I wanted to rub up against heaven
But I was black and not allowed

East of freedom and west of a slave
Crumpled inside and kept below
A thousand bombers stuck in my sight
I was a fighter they didn't know

Now I am home in my valley
And my cloud stares down from the skies
At this tree where I am hanging
And birds peck out my eyes.

FLOYD WALLACE.

WHAT IS TRUMAN'S GAME?

The President's strikebreaking tactics are now being used against the maritime workers. What Henry Morgenthau said to Henry Wallace.

By VIRGINIA GARDNER

Washington

ALL sections of labor seem to be agreed that, whether or not the President vetoes the Case bill, labor is in danger. Labor will be in danger as long as it is possible for the President to use the technique of sending a rescue party after any employer in distress—as long as he can create an “emergency” at will, a fake emer-

dates back to last September when many of the maritime unions first asked the operators to negotiate. Keeping labor problems geared to a wartime basis, allowing Secretary of Agriculture Anderson to wreck OPA from within while Congress wrecks it from without, Mr. Truman's design has been demonstrated. By retaining

throughout the world to strike against American shipping.” But this was simply a vulgarization of what the President solemnly told the nation in his radio speech, with its allusion to a second Pearl Harbor.

An analogy between Truman's handling of the rail strike and his conduct during maritime negotiations, before any strike occurred, was made by Martin Miller, speaking in the place of A. F. Whitney of the Railroad Trainmen before a meeting of Congressmen. “Is the administration doing anything to help negotiations?” he asked. Answering his own question, he said, “No. The President instead is threatening to use the Army and Navy to break the strike. And the shipowners are sitting back to let a gracious government break it for them.”

Even the AFL has bypassed its too-usual method of making deals on Capitol Hill and is fighting the Truman bill with no holds barred. Lew Hines, veteran AFL legislative bumbler, told the rump session of Congressmen that workers are “getting fed up,” and pointed to the general strike in Rochester, N. Y., as proof. Then he seemed a little alarmed at his own militancy. “I may seem to be just a little pugnacious here today,” he apologized. “I don't mean to.”

It seems that labor leaders, in common with many liberals in Washington, as yet fail to relate the President's labor program with the administration's provocative attitude towards the Soviet Union and the threat of war. They readily see the threat of fascism in his proposals, but shy away from any implications of preparation for war. The liberal viewpoint, as expressed by one of them, is, “It isn't necessarily so complicated. It's just that Truman has been Snyderized,” alluding to John W. Snyder, the ex-St. Louis banker who headed War Mobilization and Reconversion and has just been appointed Secretary of the Treasury. Nevertheless, he added, “Truman has started on a program from which he can't retreat.”

How the “friends of labor” such as Senators Scott W. Lucas (Ill.), Carl



“Remember, Weatherbee, the NAM is counting on you young bloods.”

gency built out of real and unsolved problems of peacetime, and find a willing Congress to help bail out such an employer.

The President can see a “crisis” with each new show of real labor strength. Scarcely had he delivered the country from the “crisis” provoked by “two men,” forgetting of course that they represented almost half the rail workers in the United States, than he saw another “crisis” in the threatened maritime strike, a “crisis” which

his war powers, which he alone can end, and forcing labor to negotiate in an atmosphere of “treason,” he can continue to rush to Congress to “rescue recalcitrant employers and crack down on workers,” as AFL President Green put it.

Rep. John Rankin on June 4 called for the immediate arrest of Harry Bridges and Joseph Curran of the maritime unions, saying they were “committing treason against the United States by calling on unions

A. Hatch (N. Mex.), and Alben J. Barkley were scorched by wires and letters from their home districts for supporting the Truman labor program is evident from the experience of Rep. Adolph J. Sabath, veteran chairman of the Rules committee, whose progressive record is almost perfect. But Rep. Sabath, while waging a strong fight against the Republican-sponsored Case bill, had obeyed the administration edict, summoned his committee hastily to grant the President's bill a rule, and voted for it on the floor. The AFL and CIO met jointly in Chicago and wires stormed the Illinois delegation. Sen. Lucas got most of the fire. A letter to Rep. Sabath, however, declared the Illinois delegation had acted "disgracefully" and across it a woman had written, "And that applies especially to you, Mr. Sabath." He was particularly hurt by a wire which came in saying, "Your vote cancels out forty years of service to labor."

Many a Congressman, it is reported on the Hill, got on the telephone and pleaded with people back home that he didn't know what he was doing, that he was rushed into it. These Congressmen then complained sorrowfully that labor people were unmoved by this plea of not having known the gun was loaded.

The Truman program for straight-jacketing labor is so incredible in a democracy that it has allowed the Republicans a chance to pose as defenders of civil liberties by attacking its provisions. Sen. Robert A. Taft, of all the Republicans, was the most persistent. There were many things he didn't like about the bill, including section 5, which allows the Attorney General to go into court and get an injunction which may require a striker to go to work, with the penalty that if he doesn't he can be held in contempt of his government and put in jail. But Taft's own law which he plugged would consider a strike as an insurrection. Thus he said: "I am imagining a bill that is, in effect, a bill against revolution, if you please. . . ."

Sen. Arthur Vandenberg found a labor draft "repugnant to every principle of free, constitutional democracy." Know why? He did not think it wise to draft an army of "rebels." Said the democracy-loving Senator: "An army of so-called rebels is not calculated to be a particularly reliable or productive one."

But, he assured his fellows, he did not want to deprive the President of any authority he needed "to protect the

general welfare," or to "shatter effective liaison between the Congress and the White House upon this score in such times as these." No sir. ". . . and I am frank to say that I have particularly in mind the truculently threatened general strike on June 15, which would not only paralyze our rapidly expanding and vitally essential export trade," he said, putting that first, "but which would also perhaps condemn to death hundreds of thousands of helpless people in the famine zones of the so-called liberated areas of the Old World." Of course the maritime union leaders had repeated over and over again, and even the press had quoted them some of the time, as saying no relief or troop ships would be struck. (P.S. Vandenberg voted for the bill.)

The Republican "liberal," Sen. Leverett Saltonstall, made the most of

The press solemnly declared he took this course to make the bill more palatable to the Republicans, just as if it were the most natural thing in the world.

WITH all the columns that have been written on seizure, it is rarely pointed out that the administration has foisted a completely new concept of seizure on the public, compared to that in use during the war. Then it was used as an aid to workers who had rendered themselves defenseless by forfeiting their strike weapon for the duration. It was used to compel employers to comply with WLB directives. Now it is used to impose unfair settlements, as was done in the rail case, and to crush the right to strike. It chokes off all sorts of fundamental rights inherent in the free bargaining process.



"Hopkins, can you honestly say that you've become more efficient since 1928 when we did give you a raise?"

the situation. He was from "the state in which the Boston Tea Party was held," which valued "the freedom and liberty of the individual." But it was not clear which weighed the heaviest with him, the horrors of the provision that union leaders "and officers of companies," he said primly, could be jailed, or that the companies would lose their profits while the government ran their seized plants. (P.S. He voted for the bill.)

Of course Majority Leader Barkley agreed that the business about the profits should come out of the bill. It did.

Under the new theory of seizure, too, the more important a man is to the economy, the less rights he gets. The employer can plead the importance of his industry, and, keeping his wages low, need not fear a strike, because he knows a strike will fail if the President stirs up public opinion against it.

Anti-labor forces in Congress, and the administration, are aiding the employers who never in the ten years since the Wagner Act was adopted have given up hope of repealing it. They have created the atmosphere in which

it is assumed that you must have legislation to have labor "peace," and the pernicious practice of legislating for a particular situation has grown up. The Smith-Connally Act was passed to get the coal operators out of a hole. Conveniently, this type of legislation saves its advocates from the charge of being anti-labor. Truman could say he was against general anti-labor legislation, but he had to save the country from two labor leaders. The Byrd amendment to the Case bill was the result of Sen. Byrd's saying to the coal operators, in effect, "I'll pass you a law making it illegal to have any other type of welfare fund than one you want."

As for 1948, all that labor people will say is that Sen. Pepper's leadership has shone out in recent weeks.

To date labor has been kept on the defensive by a war of nerves waged relentlessly by the employers, Congress, the press, and now by the aggressive little man in the White House who seems stagestruck with his role of the tough guy with an atom bomb in his pocket and a Pinkerton badge in his lapel.

The reactionaries' fight to repeal the Wagner Act will increase in tempo. During the next months labor will be battling for its very life. And historically, as Sen. Pepper said, the first step on the road to fascism is suppression of labor. Unless labor and the people mobilize fast, the fight will be lost. And if unions are crushed, the best bulwark against imperialist war is gone.

Washington Notes

ONE of the mysteries, aside from the difference in treatment accorded the miners, with whom the government chose to negotiate, and the rail workers, with whom it didn't, is why the coal strike was prolonged three days after the main terms were agreed on and reduced to memorandum on May 25. With a move of his bushy eyebrow John L. Lewis could have ended the strike then. But it was continued on through Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday at the cost of some \$12,000,000 in wages for the miners, who were already destitute from the strike. Possibly there were two ham actors in the picture instead of one, as Sen. Wayne Morse found.

EVEN John Steelman, the trusted adviser of the President who delayed the final announcement that the railroad strike was settled until after the

President got through most of his speech to Congress asking for legislation to draft strikers, reportedly said he didn't blame the maritime boys for being sore at the Chief. There was no question, he said, according to a story told some labor men by a Congressman who has taken a lead in fighting the Case and Truman bills, that the President's threat to break the maritime strike put a terrific crimp in negotiations.

HENRY MORGENTHAU JR., former Treasury chief, was not slow in blaming the President for the "crisis." He telephoned Henry Wallace, Secretary of Commerce, and read him in



"I see that Truman has gained added stature—wonder who sold them to him?"

advance his speech saying Truman "has decided to make an open and final rejection of the Roosevelt inheritance." He then asked Mr. Wallace if he didn't think it was time that all New Dealers (there being only one left) got out of the Cabinet. There was a long silence on the other end of the wire. Aides of Wallace reportedly have been explaining that he is waiting for a better time and a better issue before making any exit, with the implication that it would be to help prevent our going to war with the Soviet Union. But Sen. Claude Pepper, who does more than anyone in Washington to combat the anti-Soviet hysteria, manages to fight on two fronts at once. He has led the fight against the Case bill and Truman bill in the Senate, and his prestige has gone up tremendously, while Wallace's has taken a nose-dive.

REP. JOHN RANKIN was in his most jubilant, Jew-baiting mood over the President's labor program. Henry Morgenthau, he said, "stuck his long nose into the radio" and attacked Mr. Truman and the Congressmen who backed him "in the great crisis." And if few public utterances in and out of Congress in defense of labor have drawn a parallel between Truman's domestic and foreign policies, Mr. Rankin made a connection nevertheless.

"Mr. Morgenthau is kicking," he said, "because Mr. Truman and his administration have turned down his vicious, atheistic policy of vengeance, and substituted therefor the American policy of Christian justice in our international affairs."

Rep. A. J. Sabath, replying to Rankin, said the gentleman from Mississippi "is not subtle." "By saying that Mr. Morgenthau, an honored and honorable citizen, 'had to stick his nose in' the gentleman seeks to emphasize that the object of his attack is, or might be, of Jewish descent, which the gentleman deems to be derogatory, regardless of any man's proved loyalty, patriotism or Americanism." Then he went on to suggest that he wished Mr. Rankin would investigate all un-American activities, particularly the Ku Klux Klan. "And now the gentleman from Mississippi has called Gerald L. K. Smith before his committee, and given him a public forum from which to speak and spread his un-American doctrines of racial and religious hatred and of state authoritarianism," he said. "But have they actually investigated his un-American activities, the sources of his funds? Indeed, they have not. . . ."

PRESIDENT TRUMAN recently took time out from breaking strikes to make two commencement addresses, one before a graduating class in Chesertown, Md. The Washington Post said he "expressed a longing for 'small business, small educational institutions, and small communities.'" The reporter added that it was a "friendly, nostalgic talk, inspired by an Eastern Shore atmosphere. . . ." Which is not surprising. The Eastern Shore section of Maryland is notorious for its reactionary, repressive conditions. It is the hinterland where labor union organizers are beaten up and chased out, where Negroes are lynched, where the Ku Klux Klan once had a stronghold.

review and comment



THE IRISH FARRELL NEVER KNEW

As immigrants in 1860 they were the "Slavs of American industry." A fine novel of today.

By JOHN MELDON

OUR OWN KIND, by Edward McSorley. Harpers. \$2.50.

ONLY a man of the people could have written a book like *Our Own Kind*. Edward McSorley has made an excellent contribution to American literature in his story of old Ned McDermott and his fatherless grandson Willie, set in the period shortly before and just after World War I, among the Irish working class of Providence, Rhode Island. It is a revealing and valuable novel, for the author brings to the reader a penetrating picture of the Irish-American Catholic man and mind. With fine artistry he corrects the false and contemptuous picture of the average, decent Irish-American which men like James Farrell have been peddling to the book trade for many years.

Although McSorley confines himself to a story covering a few years of the homespun happiness and tragedies of Old Ned and his family and assorted relatives, he weaves into the background a rich design of Irish revolutionary leaders and history. He also accomplished what is obviously a conscious task of explaining how the Catholic Church achieved a firm grip on the Irish in this country. His intimate description of the way the priesthood works upon the minds of the very young is one of the most absorbing and revealing aspects of this novel.

The tale McSorley tells is simplicity itself. Old Ned McDermott came over from Ireland with the exodus before the Civil War. While others seeking a new life in America ended up with a pick and shovel, Ned sweated his life away in a foundry. The Irish immi-

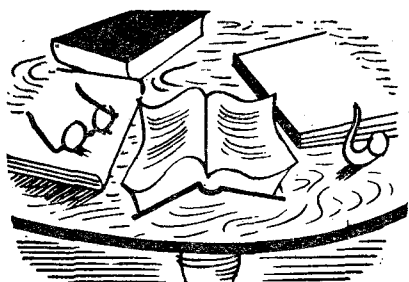
grants of the 1850's and 60's were the Slavs of American industry in whose days of expanding capitalism. They were given precisely the same social and economic status accorded the later Slav immigrants who filled our steel and coal towns with their brawn. Like many of the Irish newcomers in those days, old Ned was illiterate; and some of the most delightful, although at times heartbreaking, pages of *Our Own Kind* are devoted to McSorley's account of how Ned tries to hide his illiteracy from his grandson Willie, whom he loves with a fierce intensity. As one turns the pages of this book and follows old Ned's determined struggle to achieve for young Willie everything he himself has been denied—a good education and an economically secure position in life—the figure of the grandfather emerges as one of the most sensitive character portrayals in modern writing.

After young Willie's father was killed in the flush of manhood in the same foundry in which Ned toiled, the old man took the grandson into his house to raise him and make a scholar out of him. Ned worshipped learning; like the Jewish immigrants who flooded the New York garment industry with low-paid manpower after 1905, Ned dedicated his remaining days to hard work

and sacrifice in order that his grandson could become a doctor, a lawyer, anything that would spare him from slaving with his hands and living from payday to payday while the thin knife of starvation hung always menacingly by a thread from the kitchen rafters. Old Ned wanted his grandson to escape from his class, not because Ned despised his class—he loved his people—but because he dreaded what membership in that class often did to a human being, and what it had done to him. But in the end, the grandfather's stubborn determination is relentlessly whittled down by the inexorable pattern of mishaps and black misfortune that the working class has to contend with. Willie faces life ahead with a cold heart and frightened eyes when the foundry catches up with Ned, and his grandfather dies. The reader has a feeling of near-catastrophe as *Our Own Kind* ends, but one also knows that Willie, who worshipped his grandfather, has absorbed much of the old fellow's splendid character and that he will fight an uphill battle to become the learned man the grandfather had wanted him to be.

In reading a book like *Our Own Kind* one begins to understand this large section of present-day America, for in the main the present generation of Irish-Americans comes from the sort of background from which Willie sprang. Of equal importance is McSorley's keen understanding of the Irish-American Catholic mind. Throughout the novel he shows a thorough knowledge of the activities of the Catholic Church and of its intimate contact with its fiercely loyal adherents. Someone once vulgarized but accurately translated an ancient axiom of the Catholic Church into "Get them young and keep them." McSorley gives a vivid picture of the application of that basic law of the Church, and he does it with a subtle irony—perhaps too subtle. There is sharp irony and there is the gentle variety. McSorley tends to be too gentle, even granting that the Catholic Church of those days had not as yet produced any Coughlins. True, McSorley does speak out through the grandfather, who deftly challenges the efforts of two priests, Father Jim and Father Joe, when they attempt to mould the thinking of young Willie in political affairs. Old Ned, for all his loyalty to the Church and his respect for the priesthood, draws the line when they leave the realm of ecclesiastic abstractions and distort history. When the





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priests tell Willie about Dan O'Connell, who fought for Catholic emancipation in Ireland "for the poor" in 1829 and Willie raptuously tells his grandfather all about it that evening, Old Ned says:

"Oh, that was a great man . . . I was sure the priest would speak of him. Oh, my, there's no one like Daniel O'Connell. No, indeed, he was a great Irishman. He was—well, God damn it, he was the kind of a great man it seems only the Irish are—two parts saint and two parts son of a bitch." Old Ned then proceeds to tear O'Connell apart with all the unrestrained venom an old Irish worker is capable of, and by the time he is through, young Willie has had a straight accounting of Irish history. It sticks, whereas the priestly distortions do not.

The working-class instincts of the grandfather crop out repeatedly in a sort of tug-of-war between the clergy and the old man for the mind of the lad, with the old man always the winner when it comes to earthly affairs. On the other hand, McSorley does not minimize the powerful effects of the atmosphere of grandeur and mysticism the Church is able to implant in the hearts of the very young. McSorley portrays two basic types of the priesthood: there is Father Jim, the hail-fellow parish priest who constantly talks to Willie after he becomes an altar boy, and to other Irish youngsters in the parish. He is no *Going My Way* priest, but the real stuff, the kind you will find in most any parish of New York, Chicago or San Francisco or any industrial town in the country. But like the priest in *Going My Way* he does play ball on the back lots, he does concern himself with the problems of the boys and their families, and he is a decent man within the limitations of his church-trained mentality. Unless one realizes that the average small parish priest in this country is more or less of that type, one will not be able to understand why the Catholic Church has such strong and deep roots among the Catholics in this country. Father Jim, it might be said, is the field organizer of the Church.

The author presents the second basic type in the figure of Father Joe. He is less concerned with parish problems for he is studying for the Jesuit order and is slated for a post in the ideological-apologist wing of the Church—among its propagandists, thinkers and politicians. He does, however, do his bit in shaping Willie's mind, and McSorley

takes the reader inside that young mind to show the effects.

Interspersed among the lines of *Our Own Kind* McSorley recalls that the bitter, centuries-old struggle for freedom in Ireland was often intimately linked with the struggle for religious freedom, or to be exact, for the freedom of the Catholic religion. That feeling of kinship between the battle for political liberty and independence and the fight for Catholic liberties was brought to this country by the older Irish and passed down to their offspring. And it is grandfather Ned who reminds young Willie that even in this country the Irish of fifty and seventy-five years ago had to stand guard before their churches throughout the night with clubs when anti-Catholic mobs threatened to tear them down brick by brick. Indeed, one of the most moving incidents in this novel occurs when old Ned sadly and angrily rebukes Willie for having joined with a gang of neighborhood hoodlums and attacked a defenseless elderly Jew.

"Joseph says the Jews cheat you and they kidnap Catholic babies when there's no one looking and kill them right in their churches," Willie said.

"Indeed," said Ned. "Wicked, ain't they?"

"He says they drink your blood, too, if they catch you and murder you."

McSorley then unfolds, through old Ned, the almost identical persecution the Catholics of this country once faced, and he grimly reminds the boy:

"Willie, did you know years ago they used to say, the Yankees used to say years ago, that the priests was always after kidnapping Protestant girls on the streets in the dark of the night and carrying them off to a convent somewhere in the woods or something to make—to make baggages of them? Well, that's what they said in them days, though no priest was ever trapped at it. They used to say the priests would take the children that was born in the convents, babies that couldn't walk a step or defend themselves, babies the nuns had and didn't want, and bring them out into the woods at night and bury them alive, screaming and crying their hearts out on the way, so they'd muffle them up in a priest's garments so no one would hear them and bury them alive in the dead of night. . . . And what is it, our turn to be savages? Is it our turn, too? God damn it, Willie, is that what's to come of all the schools and the teaching? Sure we

might have left the Yankees burn them down long ago and be done with it. If that's all's to come of it!"

McSorley, through an unflinching tackling of the race-hate problem and drawing upon actual history, has written one of the most telling blows against anti-Semitism in modern literature. As old Ned says: "Damn strange things happen to the Irish in this country," and McSorley reminds some present-day Irish of that fact.

I regretted deeply only one flaw in this first novel of McSorley's. Willie's Uncle Pat, a union moulder, is killed after being horribly beaten at a Socialist meeting. McSorley might have developed Pat into a major character and thereby strengthened the book very much. But one gets only a fleeting glimpse of the class-conscious Pat and why he broke with the Church. This is the one big flaw in an otherwise fine novel.

I have touched upon the story in *Our Own Kind* in order to emphasize its two principle underlying themes: an exposition of Catholic thinking as it is reflected upon the working-class Irish here and the vivid recollection of the plight of Irish workers in this country around the turn of the century. But there is far more to the book than that. McSorley has the magic touch of working-class humor—often hilarious. He has a topflight talent for giving a rounded picture of a people—the Irish, good and bad. He presents unforgettable portrayals of the Irish-American worker, good, decent and hard-working; the cop, as mean and brutal as many of his current counterparts; the frustrated Irish biddy whose vitriolic tongue eats away the happiness of others; the early prototype of the politician, as hypocritical and self-seeking as any Tammany Hall tinhorn of today. They are all there and that is what makes *Our Own Kind* not only engrossing and delightful reading, but a major gift to American letters.

Making the World Round

THE BIG ROAD, by Norman Rosten. Rinehart. \$2.50.

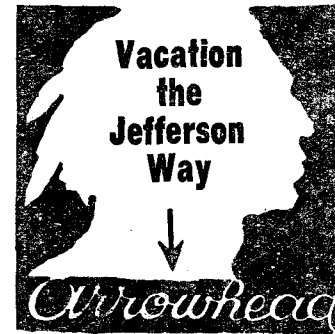
I BEGAN reading Norman Rosten's narrative poem, *The Big Road*, at the opening of the railroad strike and finished it just after listening to the crucifixion of labor by our leading misrepresentative and his demand that any worker who strikes against the government henceforth be sentenced to the armed forces, a speech wildly cheered

by both our Houses. I wondered what the returning veterans of World War II thought of that sentence—and among them the valiant GI's who took part in the construction of the Alcan Highway, the theme of Rosten's poem. Composed before the disgraceful event in Washington, this heroic paean answers the discreditors of labor.

The bold and energetic Rosten traces the Alcan Highway back to some of its famous or infamous forebears: to the Appian Way which was raised on the backs of African slaves, to the Road of the Incas conquered by Pizarro, to Bering's voyage under Peter the Great to a seaway and bridge from Kamchatka to Alaska, and to our Wilderness Road and Daniel Boone's belief in "plowing, not plunder." In a necessarily brief review, it is impossible to convey the broad range of this narrative, its tumultuous variations, its intensity and drive, and the positive combination of vision and realization. In his complex design, always clear in its abundant details, the poet has employed traditional with original stanzaic structures: grave blank verse along with the galloping four-foot line, biblical chanting along with the chants and spirituals of common folk, and the copious use or invention of colloquial monologues and dialogues setting forth the GI in his own infinite variation, including his griping as he struggles against almost superhuman odds. The poem is also remarkable for its vivid description, step by step, of the mechanical forces brought to bear against the forces of nature, and of the relation between the tiniest act and the tremendous expedition as a whole.

Facts and figures are revealed on an exact scale and the poet, in this regard, is as accurate as the professional engineer. But his poem is a transmutation of the prosaic into the poetic, of the material into the spiritual, of the past and present into the future. One of his finest devices is the dramatic parallel drawn between related events such as the siege and relief of Leningrad on the one hand and the equally hard-won victory of the GI's on the other. Both sides seem to be digging a tunnel toward common brotherhood. Nor does the poem eschew the comic, the bawdy, the sceptical, the truly religious. For all these ants of humanity are as tragic and funny and absurd and wistful as they can possibly be under the strain of a task whose destiny is beyond their comprehension but to which they stick with their immortal guts. We even get

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to know them name by name—names we shall never forget.

Norman Rosten has written a poem that is successful in carrying on our best traditions in the field of social imagination. *The Big Road* is a commanding work in the image of Tom Paine's and Henry Wallace's common man, and along the road of Whitman's *Leaves of Grass* and Stephen Benet's *John Brown's Body*. And it demands consolidation around our crawling earth. The GI's pushed toward that consolidation in the Alcan Highway. It is now our job to continue, advance and complete that universal design.

ALFRED KREYMBORG.

Marx in the Fo'c'sle

COMMUNISTS ON THE WATERFRONT, by
Herb Tank. New Century. 35¢.

HERB TANK talks the language of the waterfront—or, more exactly, of seagoing seamen. Not the "shiver my timbers" jargon of pirate fiction but "the pork chop horrors" lingo of real-life battles for decent conditions aboard American steamships. His 112-page book tells the story of the seaman's fight to create and maintain a union. It also explains the Communist role in that struggle, in terms of "what Communists believe and what they fight for."

"Communist seamen believe that their opinions or knowledge of the way things are should help them change that situation.

"Take a ship that feeds lousy. There may be a lot of opinions or excuses of why she feeds lousy. The only opinion that's worth a damn is the one that leads to action, the opinion that changes a bad-feeding ship into a good feeder."

The odd thing is that this salty style appeals just as much to landlubbers as to seafarers. And it expounds the theoretical content of scientific socialism in a casual messroom style that will go down without translation in any coffee-pot in the country. Take the author's discussion of the word "Utopian" as used by Marxists:

"Every now and then, especially when times get tough, some character sits down and figures out what's wrong with the world. Then he writes a book. Now all the world has to do is follow this guy's advice and presto: no more wars, no more unemployment, and every ship a floating paradise.

"Books like that have been written

for a long time. They haven't improved conditions. Maybe because ship-owners don't read them. Marx called books and schemes of that kind Utopian. . . ."

Alternating with these salt-sprayed debates on the economic facts of life ("What the hell is Capital?" "Karl Marx and Pork Chops") are "Flashbacks," chapters of modern history as seen from the poop.

"March 4, 1885: Seamen's wages cut to twenty-five dollars a month. A guy by the name of Danielwicz came on the scene. He had just come back from the Sandwich Islands. Danielwicz was a Communist; a member of the First International Workingmen's Association which had been founded by Karl Marx.

"Organize," he told the seamen.

"A meeting was organized. Four of the speakers were Communists, members of the First International. The seamen acted quickly. The Coast Seamen's Union, later to become the Sailor's Union of the Pacific, was organized."

The flashbacks should be studied for their compactness. Perhaps 500 words furnish a porthole-eye view of events from the revolt of the armored cruiser Potemkin in 1905, through Jack London's resignation from the American Socialist Party because it had abandoned the class struggle, to 1924 when "William Z. Foster, former seaman, was the Communist Party candidate for President of the United States."

Or, take late 1945, with the war over. "The oiler drank his cocoa. "Listen, Pop, it ain't going to be like after the last war, see."

"Yeh? Who says it ain't?"

"Me, Pop—I says it ain't. Me and a lot of other Joe Bananas with grease on our dungarees."

In short, Herb Tank has got fundamental things to say on both the theoretical and the practical side. A lot of us have been crabbing for years about the faults of progressive pamphlets. Well, here is what we've been asking for: popularization without vulgarization. The illustrations by Jim Turnbull and the typographic effects help make the pamphlet a read-it-in-one-sitting job.

I'm for this little book. I'm for it as a study outline. I'm for it as a model to be used in reducing other involved problems to simple images. I'm for its sale far beyond the waterfront. I'm for it, period.

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What Germans Think

EXPERIMENT IN GERMANY: The Story of an American Intelligence Officer, by Saul K. Padover. Duell, Sloan & Pearce. \$3.75.

THE Allied General Staff wanted to know what the average German was thinking and fearing and hoping. They were fortunate in finding as leader of a psychological warfare team a scientifically trained man with an original idea and the initiative and courage to carry it out. His idea was to do political-military intelligence work by long and careful questioning of individual Germans from every possible class and age level. Mr. Padover gives us the story of how he carried out this job for seven months. Cast in autobiographical form and written in vigorous and vivid language, the book takes us into the life of Germany on the brink of defeat. The substance of over fifty "profiles" of Germans makes up the bulk of the book.

Meet August Wagemann, acting mayor of Kornelimuenster. A monarchist, he considered himself an anti-Nazi and a lover of liberty, but "What good is freedom to you if you are dead?" Under Hitler he made a lot of money in the textile business.

Here is Adolf Gladding, age fifteen, mechanics apprentice. His father had been jailed for utterances against the Fuehrer. He himself is a good Nazi. "What," he wants to know, "are the chances of the United States joining Germany to fight the Russians?"

Richard Gaertner was a member of the Social Democratic Party and an official in the police administration in Aachen. Unwilling to bow to the Nazis, he lost his job and lived on a pension of seventeen marks (five dollars) a week. But when asked what should be done with the Nazis, he replied in Nazi terms, "Those with Nazi blood cannot be redeemed. They must be made permanently sterile." Asked what he was prepared to do against the Nazis he sobbed, "I have no confidence in the German people." "I will not act against the Nazis. I will not cover myself with blood, not even that of Hitlerites."

It is a relief to learn of Josef Mohren, son of a Communist and a Communist of sorts himself. He risked his life to de-mine booby traps left by the army. And yet, though he was a worker, a coal miner, he was convinced that "there are no good Germans. Even the workers are corrupted and

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without guts." Sabotage in the mines was unknown.

The Bishop of Aachen was a man of great influence in the Church. He was a professed lover of truth and justice. Padover asked him, "Did the Church have no courageous figures to lead the fight against the Nazi curse?" "The Church wanted no martyrs." "Jesus, the founder of your Church, was not afraid to utter the truth that was in Him." "Yes, that is so, but look what they did to Him."

We learn from Kurt Pfahl, son of a Lutheran mother and a Jewish father, who managed to survive under a false identity after release from a concentration camp, that even non-Nazi Germans rarely helped Jews or other victims of the State. They were simply indifferent although they *all knew about Nazi atrocities.*

Jean Chaussy, who worked in the Gas House in the concentration camp Sachsenhausen, "realized that there are things worse than death." His account is so nauseating that it is hard to believe that he preferred to stay alive.

The most important points to emerge from the many interviews are:

1. Social Democrats from the rank and file expressed their consciousness of error in having failed to unite with the Communists to prevent Hitler's rise to power. They felt that such unity must be established now for the sake of the workers' proper functioning in post-Hitler Germany.

2. The German working class is by no means exempt from the blame that attaches to their whole country; yet Padover sees in the left-wing workers the only hope for democracy.

3. "When the Red Army buried the Wehrmacht's hope for victory in Russia, people began to turn against Hitler, passively of course, and to doubt the wisdom of his leadership. The Red Army not only destroyed Hitler's legions but also his prestige."

4. The enemy German's technique is "Hate Russians, flatter Americans. . . . The deeper we penetrate into Germany the more we may expect to see a systematic campaign of kisses for Americans and hisses for Russians. This could become the deadliest booby trap we have yet encountered."

5. While our armies were blasting off the military arm of fascism, the American Military Government was in too many instances busily preserving fascist rule. In Aachen, for example, the most powerful men in the community "were not the American con-

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querors but the group of Germans who belonged to a Nazi armaments clique."

6. The healthiest people in mind and spirit to be found in all Germany were the young Russian slave laborers. "Despite what they had been through," Padover reports, "they have no neuroses, no fears, no worries. . . . Where an American soldier will say dubiously, 'I hope I get a job when the war is over,' these Russians said, as a matter of fact, 'I shall be this . . . I shall do that. . . .' Never any doubt about the future. . . . They come from a hard school, they are truly iron men. Perhaps the world belongs to them. Perhaps such people deserve it."

Whatever individual acts of heroism may have been performed, there is no evidence of any effective organized opposition to Nazism during the war. The Underground made no serious difficulties for the regime. The July 20 plot against Hitler was not a working class plot.

The tragedy of Germany is that the German working class proved itself unworthy of its heroes. It permitted the imprisonment and slaughter of its leaders and when the decimated vanguard attempted to rally anew, the rank and file gave no response. The organized forces of fascism had succeeded in destroying the ideal of working-class struggle and had substituted in the worker's mind an image of a Greater Germany in which all Germans would grow fat.

The democratic tradition was always weak in Germany because of the cowardice of the bourgeoisie which, afraid of the working class, preferred to leave state control to the Prussian Junker successors of the feudal princes, rather than risk taking full power itself. The working-class will to struggle was further weakened in the years of Social Democratic dominance with its vacillation and class-collaborationist policies. The Gestapo terror completed the work. The German working class which our men found in Germany, in marked contrast to that of France and Italy, did not lift a finger in the cause of its own emancipation.

Since Padover is not a Marxist he does not explain the "character" of the Germans on historical grounds. Nor has he any conception of what Communists mean by democracy. But he provides vital material which we can use in developing a proper policy towards Germany.

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WHAT ABOUT SUMMER STOCK?

More than cows are born in barns. An opportunity for progressive playwrights and directors.

By LEO SHULL

THERE is one season every year when a strange metamorphosis comes over the American theater.

Like a groundhog, it comes out of its hole, takes a look at its shadow and then retires without doing anything.

This is that phase of the theater which is known as "summer stock."

All the young hopefuls—actors, writers, directors and producers—have been using small town camps, barns and old mills as experimental laboratories for the past several decades. Here is where new plays are tried out and new actors discovered, where new producers and directors spread their wings. Here is where Margaret Sullivan, Henry Fonda, Danny Kaye, Earl Robinson and countless others got their start. Many *Pins and Needles* sketches began life in these laboratories, and everyone is familiar with the contributions of the "borscht circuit"—especially Camp Unity—to progressive theater.

Unfortunately most summer theaters are run in an unplanned fashion. Nine-tenths of their productions consist of revivals of recent Broadway hits. (Last season everyone did *Blithe Spirit*; the season before it was *Claudia*.)

Though they are completely independent of the moribund and commercialized Broadway, an invisible umbilical cord keeps them in the same orbit.

What is worthy of note, however, is that their independence does occasionally give rise to creativeness. Many plays were tried out in summer stock and became Broadway hits, like *Life With Father* or *Dark of the Moon*. Margaret Webster's *Othello* was first launched via this experimental route. But what is most hopeful is that practically every summer theater to be operated this year has promised to "test" one or two new plays.

Here is where progressives come in. Progressive playwrights and directors should take a positive stand in this matter. It is the duty of directors of these summer theaters to see that some of the many progressive plays now fu-

tinely traveling around commercial producers' desks be given a chance to be seen. For these summer theaters are assiduously scouted by film companies and Broadway producers. There is no better way of breaking through the iron wall of indifference and neglect.

In 1940 there were some 110 summer theaters in operation in the East, most of them within easy distance of New York. The number fell during the war and gas rationing, but this year, judging by the theaters already leased for operation there will again be about 100 to 125. If each theater does only one new play a season, (the average season lasts ten weeks, June to Labor Day) more new shows will have been brought to life than the total number produced on Broadway in nine months.

Furthermore, an average Broadway production costs \$25,000 to \$40,000, whereas a show can be produced in a summer theater for from \$50 to \$500.

Another opportunity which little theaters have is to bring the everyday lesson of fraternity and democracy to small towns by including Negroes on their staffs.

Then, too, there are certain plays which fail on Broadway but which should be brought to wider audiences. If little theaters must present mostly revivals, then why not show *Home of the Brave* (a story of anti-Semitism), *Jeb* (a story of a Negro veteran's return to the South), *Woman Bites Dog* (an expose of the Patterson-McCormick axis)? These are excellent plays and will lift the dramatic standards and the cultural level of the small towns more than ten *Blithe Spirits*.

These experimental laboratories would also provide room, board and stage test-tubes for resident playwrights where they could perfect their works-in-progress. The Group Theater once ran such a place. Several playwrights were invited to join the summer workshop theater in Connecticut. They were even given a small salary, if I remember correctly.

Playwrights, directors and actors who are aware that their opportunities are severely curtailed in the commercial theater should certainly look into the matter—and keep the groundhog from returning to his hole, scared by the shadow of Broadway.

For information about summer theaters, inquire at Actors' Equity, 45 W. 47. There are several summer theater booklets published for around fifty cents which are available on Broadway newsstands.

"Writer's Digest" will devote a special section to summer theaters in its June or July issue.

On Broadway

ORSON WELLES' urge to explore all the possible effects in showmanship reaches one of its possible extremes in his "musical extravaganza" *Around The World*. Welles gives the impression of having a rushing good time around the world playing a London stoolpigeon in alternate disguises as an Egyptian beggar, an Indian Fakir, a Japanese magician and a Wild-western desperado and—stepping out of that complicated character—an impresario of a condensed Mercury magic show complete with ducks, geese, rabbits and surprised customers. Welles runs away with the show—sometimes too far away.

As theater it all adds up to nothing that the spectator can take away as a memory—something even musicals can offer, witness *Call Me Mister*. If one is concerned with diverting three hours of an evening this can serve.

ISIDOR SCHNEIDER.

Worth Noting

A YOUTH RALLY will be held Friday evening, June 14, by the Second National Convention of the American Youth For Democracy at Manhattan Center, New York. Paul Robeson, Dr. Harry F. Ward, Co-chairman of the Civil Rights Congress, Kenneth Kennedy, commander of United Negro and Allied Vets, and Mollie Lieber, delegate to the World Youth Congress, will speak. An all-star revue is announced.

Those attending the rally are asked to bring along food, canned goods and cigarettes, which will be given to the maritime workers as a demonstration of youth's support for labor.

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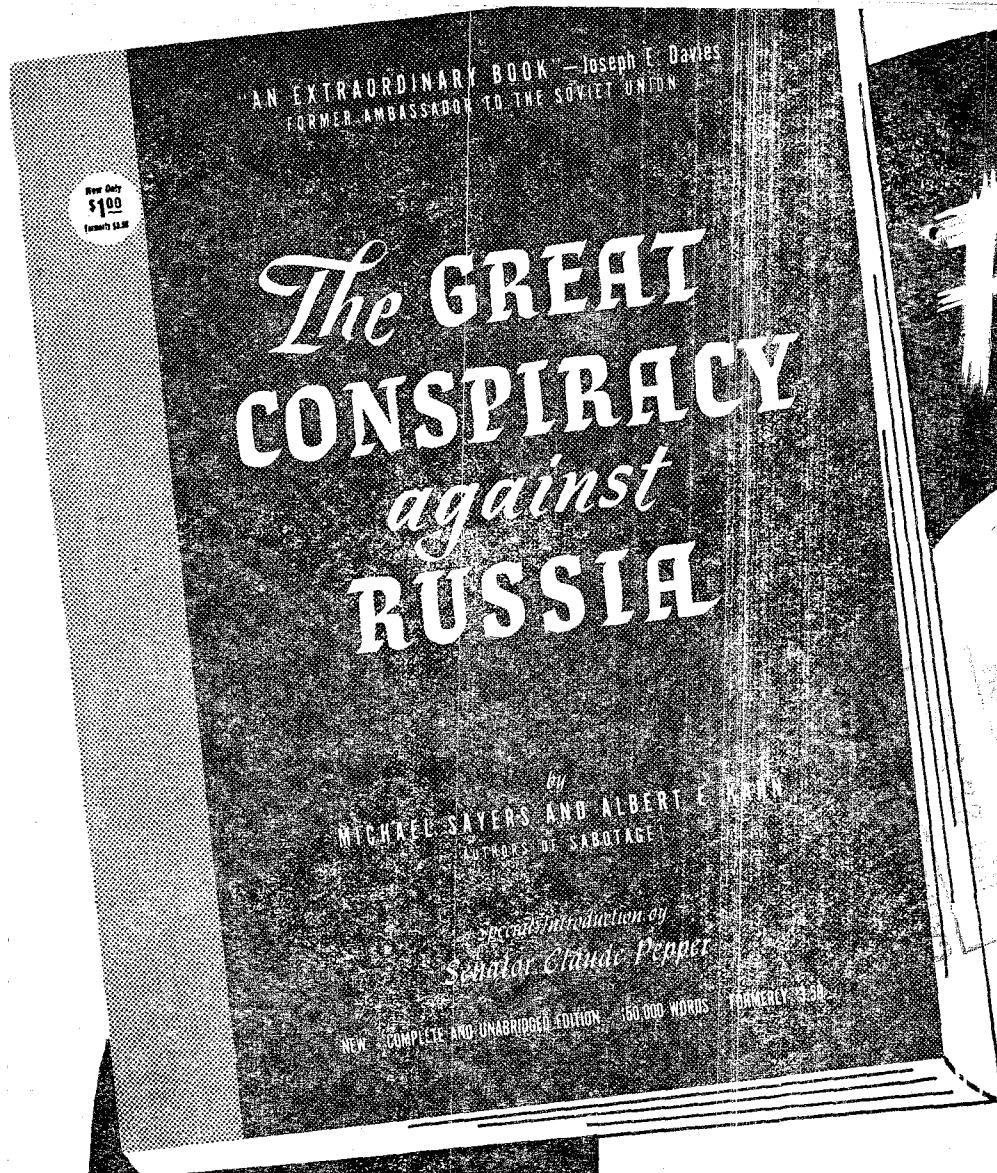
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